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CHURCH TEACHINGS

FOR THE

SUNDAY SCHOOL.

BY

EUGENE CARRINGTON,

Superintendent of St. Timothy's Sunday School,

CATONSVILLE, MD.

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BALTIMORE:

T. NEWTON KURTZ,

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PREFATORY.

It has been the effort of the compiler of this book to condense in a limited number of lessons, a history of the Church, its doctrines and ordinances.

The First Part contains a brief history of the birth, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension of our Saviour, and the descent of the Holy Ghost, together with an explanation of the principal Festivals and Fasts of the Church. This part of the work is intended to be used from the first Sunday in Advent to Trinity Sunday.

Each lesson of the First Part consists of a passage from the Bible, appropriate to the Church season, accompanied by explanatory notes from the works of some of our most eminent authors.

The Second Part, to be used from Trinity to Advent, contains the history of the progress of the Church from the creation of man to the present time, with brief sketches of the lives of many of the most prominent personages of the Old and New Testaments.

Throughout, the events are arranged in strict chronological order, according to the best harmonists.

The plan of questions and answers has been avoided, and each lesson is arranged in the form of a simple narrative, which the children can readily understand.

It is important that the teachers should prepare themselves carefully upon each lesson, so as to be able to enlarge upon many important points, which are from necessity referred to here briefly; and also to enable them to adapt their questions and explanations to the ages and minds of the pupils under their immediate charge.

By such preparation on the part of the teachers, this book may be used for the instruction of children of every age, year after year, and still the many points of interest contained in each lesson will not be exhausted; nor can these blessed truths of the Holy Scriptures be too fully impressed upon the minds and hearts of the children entrusted to their care.

As it is most applicable to this subject, it will not be out of place to quote here a few lines from the Pastoral letter recently issued by the House of Bishops of the General Convention for 1874:

"The Church maintains the Faith in its purity and integrity as taught in the Holy Scriptures held by the primitive Church, summed up in the Creeds, and affirmed by the undisputed General Councils: her Constitution, attested by Holy Scripture and ancient authors, she has not invented, but inherited from the days of old; her Liturgy was moulded by the breath of many saintly men. Your children should know the value of these precious gifts, and the grounds on which we receive and love them. In an age of indifferentism, when so many seek to reduce all religion to a sentiment, it is cruel to expose a child to the solicitations of variant systems of belief and practice without a knowledge of the origin and history of the Church of Christ, and an

intelligent understanding of the authority on which she relies for her doctrine and order."

In compiling this book free use has been made of Bishop Hobart's Edition of Nelson's Festivals and Fasts, The Eclectic Commentary, Kitto's History of Palestine, Cave's Lives of the Apostles, The Pocket Commentary and Bible Dictionary, edited by the Revs. Jamieson, Fausset and Brown, and Palmer's Ecclesiastical History.

RECTORY, ST. TIMOTHY'S CHURCH.

E. Carrington, Esq.,
Superintendent St. Timothy's Sunday School:

Dear Sir—I have carefully examined the plan you propose for the better instruction of the children of our Sunday School, in "Church doctrine and Bible truth," and can truly say that it is in every particular what I have long believed to be the only proper method of making a Sunday School, what it ought to be, the nursery of the Church.

Very truly, your Pastor and friend,

C. R. HAINS.

November, 1874.

ST. TIMOTHY'S RECTORY,
CATONSVILLE, April, 1875.

My Dear Mr. Carrington—I am very much pleased with the plan you have adopted in the volume entitled, "Church Teachings for the Sunday School," and I would heartily commend the work, in its completed form, to every Teacher who is interested in the instruction of the young. You have succeeded in condensing a great deal of valuable information about the Holy Scriptures and the Church within a limited number of Sunday lessons; and you certainly deserve the thanks of toiling Teachers.

Very truly yours,

T. W. PUNNETT, *Rector.*

PART FIRST.

Christ's Life among us—Advent to Trinity.

Christ's Incarnation, Nativity, Circumcision, and Manifestation to the Gentiles; His doctrine and Miracles; His Baptism, Fasting and Temptation; His agony and bloody Sweat; His cross and passion; His precious death and burial; His glorious resurrection and ascension; and His sending the Holy Ghost to comfort us.

WITH

AN EXPLANATION OF THE PRINCIPAL FESTIVALS AND FASTS OF THE CHURCH.

[*Note.*—The remainder of the Festivals, (The Saints' Days) are explained in the Second Part of this book in the sketches of the lives of the Apostles and other Saints.]

FESTIVALS AND FASTS.

"FESTIVALS are days set apart by the Church, either for the remembrance of some special mercies of God, such as the birth and resurrection of Christ, the descent of the Holy Ghost, etc., or in memory of the blessed apostles. and other saints, who were the happy instruments of conveying to us the knowledge of Christ Jesus. They are of ecclesiastical institution; agreeable to scripture in their general design, which is the promoting of piety; and consonant to the practice of the primitive Church."

"FASTS are days set apart by the Church, in which, by abstinence, humiliation, and repentance, we are to testify our grief for our past sins, and strengthen our resolutions of holy obedience."

Lesson I.—The First Sunday in Advent.

AN ANGEL APPEARETH TO ZACHARIAS.—*Jerusalem.*

Luke i, 5-17.

5. ¶ There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name *was* Elisabeth.

6. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

7. And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were *now* well stricken in years.

8. And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course,

9. According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

10. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense.

11. And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

12. And when Zacharias saw *him*, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

13. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard: and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.
14. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.
15. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.
16. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.
17. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

NOTES ON ADVENT.

Advent Sundays are the four Sundays that precede the great festival of our Saviour's nativity; Advent being the season appointed by the Church to prepare our minds, by proper meditations, for a due commemoration of Christ's coming in the flesh.

The first Sunday in Advent is always the nearest Sunday to the feast of St. Andrew, whether before or after.

The feast of St. Andrew occurs November 30th.

The Church computes the beginning of the year, and renews the annual course of her services, at this season of Advent.

We have also presented to us in the services of Advent, the consideration of our Lord's second coming to judge the world. (Acts xvii, 31. 2 Tim. iv, 1.)

(Bishop Hobart's Festivals and Fasts, page 95.)

NOTES ON THE LESSON.

Zacharias executed the priest's office; it was his week of waiting, and he was upon duty. Though we have not the desired mercies, yet we must keep close to enjoined services; and in diligent and constant attendance on them, we may hope mercy and comfort will come at last. (Eclectic Commentary, page 142.)

The prayers Zacharias has often made, shall now receive an answer of peace. Prayers of faith are not forgotten. (Eclectic Commentary, page 142.)

Lesson II.—The Second Sunday in Advent.

THE CONCEPTION OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.—*Jerusalem.*

Luke i, 18–25.

18. And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.
19. And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.
20. And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.
21. And the people waited for Zacharias, and marveled that he tarried so long in the temple.
22. And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless.
23. And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.
24. And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying,
25. Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on *me*, to take away my reproach among men.

NOTES.

Zacharias heard all that the angel said; but his unbelief spake. God dealt kindly with him in striking him dumb, for thus he prevented his speaking any more such distrustful, unbelieving words.

Thus also God confirmed his faith. (Eclectic Commentary, page 142)

Lesson III.—The Third Sunday in Advent.

AN ANGEL APPEARS TO MARY.—*Nazareth.*

Luke i, 26–38.

26. And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,
27. To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name *was* Mary.
* 28. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, *thou that art* highly favoured, the Lord *is* with thee: blessed *art* thou among women.

29. And when she saw *him* she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

30. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

† 31. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

‡ 32. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

‡ 33. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

34. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

35. And the angel answered and said unto her. The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

36. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.

37. For with God nothing shall be impossible.

38. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

NOTES.

* This salutation means only, that as the mother of our Lord she was the most "blessed among women" in external distinction. The mistake of the Vulgate's rendering, "full of grace," has been taken abundant advantage of by the Romish Church. But let them hear the Lord's own words, "Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." (Luke xi, 27-28.)

† The angel purposely conforms his language to Isaiah's famous prophecy. (Isaiah vii, 14.)

‡ This is but an echo of the sublime prediction.—(Isaiah ix, 6-7.) (The Pocket Commentary, J. F. & B., page 4.)

Mary's reply to the angel was entirely the language of faith, and humble admiration, and she asked no sign for the confirming her faith, as Zacharias had done. (Eclectic Commentary, page 143.)

Lesson IV.—The Fourth Sunday in Advent.

THE NATIVITY AND CIRCUMCISION OF JOHN THE BAPTIST. THE PROPHECY OF ZACHARIAS BOTH OF CHRIST AND OF JOHN.—*Juttah.*

Luke i. 57–80.

57. Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son.

58. And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.

59. And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father.

60. And his mother answered and said, Not *so;* but he shall be called John.

61. And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.

62. And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called.

63. And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all.

64. And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue *loosed*, and he spake, and praised God.

65. And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judea.

66. And all they that heard *them* laid *them* up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him.

67. And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,

68. Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people.

69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;

70. As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:

71. That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;

72. To perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;

73. The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,

74. That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the land of our enemies might serve him without fear,

75. In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

76. And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways:

77. To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins,

78. Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us,

79. To give light to them that sit in darkness and *in* the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

80. And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

NOTES.

We have an account of the birth of John the Baptist, and the great joy among all the relations of the family upon this extraordinary occasion.

Zacharias recovers his speech. The time fixed for his being silent has expired. Unbelief closed his mouth, and believing opened it again; he believes, therefore he speaks. (Eclectic Commentary, page 144.)

The prophecy of Zacharias represents the Messiah as coming, like the rising Sun, to dispel the darkness which covered the world, bringing life and immortality to light through his gospel. (Bloomfield.)

Lesson V.—The First Sunday after Christmas Day.

THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST.—*Bethlehem.*

AN ANGEL APPEARS TO THE SHEPHERDS.—*Near Bethlehem.*

Luke ii, 1-14.

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

2. (*And* this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

3. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

4. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

5. To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

6. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

7. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

8. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

9. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

10. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

11. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

12. And this *shall be* a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

13. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

NOTES.

The Church celebrates at this time the great festival of the nativity of our Saviour Jesus Christ; or the appearance of the Son of God in the flesh.

For the observation of this festival, we have the authority of the primitive Church; for though we have no certain evidence of the exact time when it was first observed, the immemorial observation of it, is a proof of its primitive institution.

The prophecies of the Old Testament foretold the miraculous birth of the Messiah. (Isaiah vii, 14.)

Christ was born at Bethlehem, according to the prediction of the prophet Micah. (Micah v, 2.)

The eternal Son of God, when he descended upon earth, chose a state of poverty, to teach us, that riches and honours are not valued in the sight of God, nor necessary to true felicity; and his birth was first announced to the simple and innocent Shepherds of Bethlehem. The important lesson is hereby taught us, that none but the poor in spirit, none but those who cherish meekness and humility of temper, are prepared to receive the blessings of salvation.

This festival is abused, when, instead of devoting it to the exercises of piety, we chiefly employ it in vain and idle pleasures. (Bishop Hobart's Festivals and Fasts, pages 108, 109, 110, 115.)

Lesson VI.—The Second Sunday after Christmas-Day.

THE CIRCUMCISION OF JESUS, AND HIS PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE. —*Bethlehem, Jerusalem.*

Luke ii, 15-28.

15. And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

16. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

17. And when they had seen *it*, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.
18. And all they that heard *it* wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.
19. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered *them* in her heart.
20. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.
21. And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.
22. And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present *him* to the Lord;
23. (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;)
24. And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons.
25. And, Behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name *was* Simeon; and the same man *was* just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.
26. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.
27. And he came by the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,
28. Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,
29. Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:
30. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,
31. Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;
32. A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.
33. And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.
34. And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold this *child* is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;
35. (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.
36. And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser; she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;
37. And she *was* a widow of about four-score and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served *God* with fastings and prayers night and day.
38. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

NOTES.

Circumcision was a rite of the Jewish law, whereby that people were received into covenant with God. In

the Christian Church the rite of circumcision has been abolished, and the sacrament of baptism substituted. By this sacrament children are entered into covenant with God under the Gospel, as they were, under the law, by circumcision; and become, by baptism, obliged to observe the commands of the Gospel, as the circumcised infant became a debtor to the whole law of Moses. (Gal. v, 3.) Since they sustain the lamentable consequences of the fall, it is certainly proper that they should enjoy the means of redemption which God has provided in his holy Church, into which baptism is the only mode of admission; for the Saviour himself declares, that except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (John iii, 5.)

In the primitive Church, baptism was administered to infants; and the custom was considered as of apostolic institution.

While Jesus Christ was holy and without sin, it was necessary that he should be circumcised, in order that he might become subject unto the law, and, sustaining the penalties of the law in our stead, might expiate our sins by his own blood.

The name of Jesus, which was given to our Saviour at his circumcision, implies his office—to save his people from their sins. (Matt. i, 21.)

The commencement of a new year should suggest to us the great value of time, which God has given us for the purpose of working out our salvation; and upon the improvement of which, therefore, depends our eternal destiny. Faithfully devoting our time, our talents and advantages, to the honor and service of God, we may humbly rejoice in his favor here, and confidently look forward to the fruition of his blessed presence hereafter. (Bishop Hobart's Festivals and Fasts, pages 128–131.)

Lesson VII.—The First Sunday after the Epiphany.

THE WISE MEN DIRECTED TO JESUS.—*Jerusalem, Bethlehem.* THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT. HEROD'S CRUELTY. THE RETURN.—*Bethlehem, Nazareth.*

Matthew ii.

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem.

2. Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

3. When Herod the king had heard *these things*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

4. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

5. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet,

6. And thou Bethlehem, *in* the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

7. Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

8. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found *him*, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

9. When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

10. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

11. ¶ And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

12. And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

13. And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

14. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt;

15. And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

16. ¶ Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men.

17. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying,

18. In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping,

and great mourning, Rachel weeping *for* her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

19. ¶ But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt.

20. Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life.

21. And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.

22. But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee.

23. And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

NOTES ON THE EPIPHANY.

The word Epiphany, signifying manifestation, may be applied to Christmas-day, when Christ was manifested in the flesh; but it is appropriated by the Church to the Festival of the Epiphany (January 6), when he was manifested to the Gentiles. In celebrating this festival, we design to show our gratitude to God for manifesting the Gospel to the Gentile world; thus vouchsafing to them equal privileges with the Jews: and the first instance of this divine favor to the Gentile world was, when the birth of Christ was declared to the wise men of the East. It was the merciful design of God, that his grace should appear unto all men: and as the Jews had notice of our Saviour's birth, by the appearance of angels to the shepherds; so the Gentiles were informed of it now, by the manifestation of Christ to the wise men of the East.

The manifestation of the Saviour to the Gentile world, by which gracious dispensation of God we have been "called out of darkness into his marvelous light," should be commemorated with lively gratitude, with firm resolutions to walk worthy of our holy vocation, and with earnest prayer to God, that he would be pleased to extend the light of salvation to those who still sit in darkness and the shadow of death. (Bishop Hobart's Festivals and Fasts, pages 132–135.)

NOTES ON THE LESSON.

We also have in this lesson an account of the slaughter of the little children by Herod, for which cruelty the signal vengeance of God was inflicted upon him, for he was smitten with many plagues and tortures. (Josephus, *lib.* xvii, c. 8.)

Herod, under the pretence of worshiping Jesus, sought his destruction: hence we may learn that religion is sometimes used as a cloak for ambitious and worldly designs.

Since innocent children were made a sacrifice to the ambition of a cruel tyrant, we may learn, that suffering and affliction are not always proofs of guilt, but, on the contrary, are sometimes the marks of God's favor. (Bishop Hobart's Festivals and Fasts, pages 125, 126.)

Lesson VIII.—The Second Sunday after the Epiphany.

AT TWELVE YEARS OF AGE JESUS GOES TO THE PASSOVER.—HE QUESTIONETH WITH THE DOCTORS IN THE TEMPLE.—*Jerusalem.*

Luke ii, 40–52.

40. And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

41. Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover.

42. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.

43. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not *of it.*

44. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among *their* kinsfolk and acquaintance.

45. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.

46. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

47. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

48. And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

49. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my father's business?
* 50. And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.
* 51. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.
52. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

NOTES.

We have here the only record concerning our blessed Saviour from his infancy, until his showing to Israel when about twenty-nine years old.

Christ went up with his parents to Jerusalem, at the feast of the passover. It was their constant practice to attend there, according to the law, though it was a long journey, and they were poor. Worldly business must give way to spiritual concerns.

The child Jesus, at about twelve years old, went up with them. It is for the honor of Christ that children should attend on public worship, and he is pleased with their hosannas.

*His mother, though she did not perfectly understand her son's sayings, yet kept them in her heart, expecting that hereafter they would be explained. However we may neglect men's sayings, because they are obscure, yet we must not think so of God's sayings. That which at first is dark, may afterward become plain and easy. (Eclectic Commentary, pages 147, 148.)

Lesson IX.—The Third Sunday after the Epiphany.

The Ministry of John the Baptist.—*The Desert, the Jordan.*
The Baptism of Jesus.—*The Jordan.*

Mark i, 1-11.

The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God:
2. As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.
3. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.
4. John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

5. And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.
6. And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey;
7. And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.
8. I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.
9. And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.
10. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him:
11. And there came a voice from heaven, *saying*, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

NOTES.

The coming and office of St. John Baptist was foretold by the prophets. (Isaiah xl, 3; Malachi iii, 1.)

Malachi also describes him under the character of Elijah the prophet, who was to "turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers." (Malachi iv, 5, 6) (Bish. Hobart's Festivals and Fasts, page 230.)

In John's preaching and baptizing there was the beginning of the gospel doctrines and ordinances, and the first fruits of them. He preached the remission of sins and repentance. He preached Christ, and directed his hearers to expect him speedily to appear, and to expect great things from him. John, though one of the greatest that was born of woman, thinks himself unworthy to be employed in the meanest office about Christ. The most eminent saints have always been the most humble. (*Leighton*—Eclectic Commentary, page 107.)

Christ took upon himself the likeness of sinful flesh; in that, though he was perfectly pure and unspotted, yet he was washed as if he had been polluted; and thus, for our sakes, he sanctified himself, that we also might be sanctified and baptized with him. He saw the heavens opened; thus he was owned to be the Lord from heaven, and had a glimpse of the glory and joy set before him, and secured to him. (Eclectic Commentary, page 107.)

Christ heard a voice, which was encouragement to proceed in his undertaking; Thou art my beloved Son. God is well pleased in him, and with us in him. (*Leighton*—Eclectic Commentary, page 107.)

Lesson X.—The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany.

JESUS FASTETH AND IS TEMPTED.—THE ANGELS MINISTER UNTO HIM.—*Desert of Judea.*

Matthew iv, 1–11.

Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.

2. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred.

3. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

4. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

5. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

6. And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

7. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

8. Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

9. And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

10. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

11. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

NOTES.

Concerning Christ's temptation, observe, immediately after the heavens were opened to him, and the Spirit descended on him, and he was declared to be the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world, he is tempted. Great privileges, and special tokens of divine favor, will not secure from being tempted. He was directed to the

combat. Our care must be, not to enter into temptation. If we presume upon our own strength, and tempt the devil to tempt us, we provoke God to leave us to ourselves; but whithersoever God leads us, we may hope he will go along with us.

If we resist the devil, he will flee from us; he will yield, if we keep our ground.

The holy angels came, and attended our victorious Redeemer. Christ was thus succored after the temptation, for his encouragement to go on in his undertaking; and for our encouragement to trust in him; for as he knew, by experience, what it was to suffer; being tempted, so he knew what it was to be succored, being tempted; therefore we may expect, not only that he will sympathize with his tempted people, but that he will come with seasonable relief. (Eclectic Commentary, pages 16-18.)

Lesson XI —The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany.

TESTIMONY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST TO JESUS.—*Bethabara beyond Jordan.*

THE CALLING OF ANDREW, PETER, PHILIP AND NATHANAEL.—*The Jordan, Galilee.*

John i, 19-51.

19. ¶ And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou?

20. And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ.

21. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No.

22. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?

23. He said, I *am* the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

24. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees.

25. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?

26. John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not;

27. He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

28. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing.

29. ¶ The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

30. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me.

31. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.

32. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him.

33. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

34. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

35. ¶ Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;

36. And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

37. And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

38. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?

39. He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.

40. One of the two which heard John *speak*, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

41. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

42. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

43. ¶ The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.

44. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

45. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

46. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

47. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

48. Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee.

49. Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.

50. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.

51. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

NOTES.

John disowns himself to be the Christ, who was now expected and waited for. John was merely the voice of a herald to proclaim the Saviour's glory. He disowns himself to be Elias. The Jews expected the person of Elias to return from heaven, and to live among them. He indeed came in the spirit and power of Elias, but he was not the person of Elias. He disowns himself to be *that* prophet, or *the* prophet. John was not that Prophet wnich Moses said the Lord would raise up to them of their brethren, like unto him. He was not such a prophet as they expected, who would rescue them from the Romans. Though John was *a* prophet, yea, more than a prophet, yet he had his revelations, not as the Old Testament prophets had theirs; his commission and work was of another nature, and belonged to another dispensation. Being pressed for a positive answer, he gave it in the words of Scripture. In very humble, modest, self-denying expressions, he applied that Scripture to himself, which spake, not his dignity, but his duty and dependence.

The testimony of John concerning Jesus, is supposed to have been given just before Christ returned from his temptation in the wilderness.

Andrew and another disciple heard John speak of Christ as the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world, and this made them follow him. The strongest and most prevailing argument with an awakened soul to follow Christ, is, that it is he only who takes away sin.

Jesus invites them to come without delay. They asked where he lodged, that they might come at a future season; but Christ invites them immediately to come and see.

Hence learn, that it is wisdom to embrace the present opportunities; now is the accepted time.

Andrew persuaded his brother Peter to come to Christ. The disciple not named is supposed to have been the evangelist himself. (Eclectic Commentary, pages 209, 210.)

Lesson XII.—The Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany.

THE MARRIAGE AT CANA OF GALILEE—AT THE PASSOVER JESUS DRIVES THE TRADERS OUT OF THE TEMPLE—JESUS FORETELLETH HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION.—*Jerusalem.*

John ii.

And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there:

2. And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.

3. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.

4. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.

5. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do *it.*

6. And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.

7. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

8. And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare *it.*

9. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom.

10. And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: *but* thou hast kept the good wine until now.

11. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

12. ¶ After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days.

13. ¶ And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

14. And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

15. And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;

16. And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

17. And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

18. ¶ Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

19. Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

20. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

21. But he spake of the temple of his body.

22. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

23. ¶ Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast *day*, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.

24. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all *men*,

25. And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

NOTES.

We are told that the turning of water into wine was the beginning of miracles which Jesus did. That herein he manifested his glory; hereby he proved himself to be the Son of God, and his glory to be that of the Only Begotten of the Father. That his disciples believed on him. Those whom he had called, who had seen no miracle, and yet followed him, now saw this, and had their faith strengthened by it. Even the faith that is true, at first is but weak; but the manifestation of the glory of Christ is the great confirmation of the faith of Christians.

The first public work in which we find Christ engaged, was driving from the temple the mercenary traders whom the covetous priests and rulers encouraged to make a market-place of its courts.

Jesus gave them a good reason why they should not profane the temple; because it was the house of God, and not to be made a house of merchandise. It was to make the business of religion subservient to a secular interest; for the holiness of the place promoted the sale of their commodities. (Eclectic Commentary, pages 212, 213.)

The oxen, &c., were sold for the convenience of those who had to offer them in sacrifice. The changers of money changed the Roman into Jewish money, in which the temple dues (see Matthew xvii, 24) had to be paid. (The Pocket Commentary, J. F. & B., page 121.)

Christ, having thus purged the temple, gave a sign to those who demanded it, to prove his authority for so doing. The sign which he gives is, his own death and resurrection, which he foretells in figurative expressions. (Eclectic Commentary, page 213.)

Lesson XIII.—Septuagesima Sunday.

THE CALL OF SIMON PETER, ANDREW, JAMES, AND JOHN.—*Near Capernaum.*

THE HEALING OF A DEMONIAC IN THE SYNAGOGUE.—*Capernaum.*

Mark i, 16-28.

16. Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.
17. And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.
18. And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him.
19. And when he had gone a little farther thence, he saw James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets.
20. And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.
21. And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the Sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught.
22. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.
* 23. And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out,
24. Saying, Let *us* alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.
25. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him.
26. And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him.
27. And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine *is* this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.
28. And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.

NOTES.

Septuagesima Sunday occurs about seventy days before Easter.

Though Christ needs not the help of man, he is pleased to use it in setting up his kingdom.

And Christ puts honor upon those who, though mean in this world, are diligent in their business and loving to one another.

He found James and John employed, and employed together. Industry and unity are good and pleasant, and there the Lord Jesus commands the blessing, Follow me.

Those Christ calls, must leave all to follow him; and by his grace he inclines them to do so.

When Christ came into Capernaum, he took the first opportunity of preaching the gospel. Christ religiously observed the Sabbath day, by applying himself unto, and abounding in the Sabbath work, in order to which the Sabbath rest was instituted.

* The devil is here called an unclean spirit, because he has lost all the purity of his nature, because he acts in direct opposition to the Holy Spirit of God, and because with his suggestions he pollutes the spirits of men. (Eclectic Commentary, page 108.)

Lesson XIV.—Sexagesima Sunday.

JESUS WITH HIS DISCIPLES GOES FROM CAPERNAUM THROUGHOUT GALILEE.

THE HEALING OF A LEPER.—*Galilee.*

Matthew iv, 23–25.

23. ¶ And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

24. And his fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.

25. And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and *from* Decapolis, and *from* Jerusalem, and *from* Judæa, and *from* beyond Jordan.

Mark i, 40–45.

* 40. And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

41. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth *his* hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.

42. And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed.

43. And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away;

44. And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

45. But he went out, and began to publish *it* much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places; and they came to him from every quarter.

NOTES.

Sexagesima Sunday occurs about sixty days before Easter.

We do not now experience the Saviour's miraculous healing power to our bodies; but if we are cured by medicine, the praise is equally his. He is the physician of our souls; and if we apply to him and follow his directions, he will assuredly heal our maladies. (Eclectic Commentary, page 19.)

* We have here Christ's cleansing of a leper. It teaches us how to apply ourselves to Christ. With great humility this leper came beseeching him, and kneeling down to him. It teaches us that those who would receive grace and mercy from Christ, must ascribe honor and glory to Christ, and approach to him with humility and reverence. It teaches us what to expect from Christ; that according to our faith it shall be to us. (Eclectic Commentary, page 109.)

Lesson XV.—Quinquagesima Sunday.

THE POOL OF BETHESDA; THE HEALING OF THE INFIRM MAN.—*Jerusalem.*

John v, 1-16.

After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

2. Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep *market* a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.

3. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

4. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

5. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.

6. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time *in that case*, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

7. The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

8. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

9. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the Sabbath.

10. ¶ The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the Sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry *thy* bed.
11. He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.
12. Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk.
13. And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in *that* place.
14. Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.
15. The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole.
16. And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the Sabbath day.

NOTES.

Quinquagesima Sunday occurs about fifty days before Easter.

This cure was wrought at a feast of the Jews, probably the passover. Christ, though residing in Galilee, went up to Jerusalem at the feast, because it was an ordinance of God; thus he would teach us to attend religious assemblies.

Whoever first stepped in was made whole. Here is, 1st. The miraculous extent of the virtue; what disease soever it was, this water cured it, even diseases that came from contrary causes. 2d. A miraculous limitation; he that first stepped in only had benefit.

This teaches us to observe and improve our opportunities, that we slip not a season that may never return. The angel stirred the waters, but left the diseased to themselves to get in. God has put virtue into the scriptures and ordinances; if we do not make due improvement of them, it is our own fault. (Eclectic Commentary, page 221.)

Lesson XVI.—The First Sunday in Lent.

JOHN THE BAPTIST IN PRISON SENDS DISCIPLES TO JESUS.—THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS CONCERNING JOHN.—*Galilee: Capernaum.*

Matthew xi, 2–19.

2. Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples,

3. And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?

4. Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see:

5. The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

6. And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

7. ¶ And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?

8. But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft *clothing* are in kings' houses.

9. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.

10. For this is *he*, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

11. Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kiugdom of heaven is greater than he.

12. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

13. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

14. And if ye will receive *it*, this is Elias, which was for to come.

15. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

16. ¶ But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows,

17. And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.

18. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil.

19. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.

NOTES ON THE FAST OF LENT.

Lent, in the old Saxon, signifying the *Spring*, has been applied to the Spring fast, or the time of humiliation observed by Christians before the festival of Easter. This fast, probably, like other Christian observances, is of Jewish origin, corresponding with the preparation of the Jews for the yearly expiation; their humiliation being forty days before the expiation, and ours is forty days before the expiation of the sins of the whole world by the death of Christ. From the very first ages of Christianity, it was customary for Christians to set apart some time for mortification and self-denial, to prepare for the solemn feast of Easter.

This season of humiliation was observed by the primtive Christians with the most rigid strictness.

With a design to punish ourselves for our past transgressions, and to express our sorrow for them, we should practice the duties of abstinence and fasting, according to the circumstances of our health and our outward condition in the world. Our external behavior should correspond with the humiliation and seriousness we now profess. Public assemblies for pleasure and diversion should therefore now be avoided, and the festivities of social intercourse in some degree abated. The public services of the Church should be regularly and reverently attended; and we should devote a more than usual portion of our time to religious retirement; to self-examination, penitence, and prayer; to acts of charity and mercy; especially to devout and serious meditation on religious subjects. Religious meditation will strengthen our holy purposes, arm us against temptation, and inflame our souls with earnest desires to obtain the favor of God, as our supreme and satisfying good. (Bishop Hobart's Festivals and Fasts, pages 148–150.

NOTES ON THE LESSON.

We are told in our lesson to-day that John Baptist while in prison sends two of his disciples to Jesus. It is evident that John's disciples were not in general fully satisfied concerning Jesus. John seems therefore to have intended to procure them some decisive testimony from Jesus himself. The strong ought to consider the infirmities of the weak, and such as we cannot help ourselves, we should send to those who can. Christ points them to what they heard and saw. Our senses may and ought to be appealed to in things that are their proper objects. (Eclectic Commentary, page 44.)

Lesson XVII.—The Second Sunday in Lent.

THE TWELVE INSTRUCTED AND SENT FORTH.—*Galilee.*
THE SEVENTY INSTRUCTED AND SENT OUT.—*Capernaum.*
THE DISCIPLES TAUGHT HOW TO PRAY.—*Near Jerusalem.*

Luke ix, 1-6.

Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.

2. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.

3. And he said unto them, Take nothing for *your* journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece.

4. And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart.

5. And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them.

6. And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing every where.

Luke x, 1-16.

After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.

2. Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly *is* great, but the labourers *are* few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

3. Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

4. Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way.

5. And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace *be* to this house.

6. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.

7. And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

8. And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you:

9. And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

10. But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say,

11. Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

12. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city.

13. Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done

you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and hes.
14. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, an for you.
15. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be rust down to hell.
16. He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you deiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.

Luke xi, 1-4.

And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, nen he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to ay, as John also taught his disciples.
2. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which t in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will done, as in heaven, so in earth.
3. Give us day by day our daily bread.
4. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is debted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from il.

NOTES.

Christ now sent his twelve disciples abroad, who by his time were able to instruct others, delivering to them hat they had received from the Lord. They must not ake either bread or money, yet must believe they should ot want. (Eclectic Commentary, page 162.)

Afterwards our Lord sent forth seventy disciples to hose places which he himself designed to visit. Christ ent them two and two, that they might strengthen nd encourage one another.

Upon this occasion, the evangelist records the particular doom of the cities wherein most of Christ's ighty works were done.

They did not bring forth fruits agreeable to the advantages they enjoyed. (Eclectic Commentary, page 66.)

It becomes the disciples of Christ, to apply themselves o him as here for instruction in prayer. Lord, teach is to pray, is itself a good prayer, and a very needful one, for it is Jesus Christ only that can teach us, by his word and spirit, how to pray. (Eclectic Commentary, page 169.)

Lesson XVIII.—The Third Sunday in Lent.

JESUS RECEIVES AND BLESSES LITTLE CHILDREN.—*Perea.*

JESUS A THIRD TIME FORETELLS HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION.—*Perea.*

OUR LORD'S PUBLIC ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM.—*Bethany, Jerusalem.*

Luke xviii, 15-17.

15. And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when *his* disciples saw *it*, they rebuked them.
16. But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.
17. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.

Luke xviii, 31-34.

*31. ¶ Then he took *unto him* the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the SON of man shall be accomplished.
†32. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on:
†33. And they shall scourge *him*, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again.
34. And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.

Luke xix, 29-44.

29. And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called *the mount* of Olives, he sent two of his disciples,
30. Saying, Go ye into the village over against *you:* in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring *him hither.*
31. And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose *him?* thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him.
32. And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them.
33. And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt?
34. And they said, The Lord hath need of him.
35. And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon.
36. And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way.
37. And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen:
38. Saying, Blessed *be* the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

39. And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples.
40. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.
41. ¶ And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it.
42. Saying, if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things *which belong* unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.
43. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side.
44. And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

NOTES.

So welcome are children to Christ, that those grown people are most welcome to him who have most of the disposition of children; not pretending to merit as the pharisee did, but gladly owning themselves indebted to free grace as the publican. We must receive that kingdom as children, not by purchase, and must call it our Father's gift.

* The Spirit of Christ, in the Old Testament prophets, testified beforehand his sufferings, and the glory that should follow.

† The ignominy and disgrace done to Christ in his sufferings, are here insisted upon. But here, as always, when Christ spake of his sufferings and death, he foretold his resurrection as taking away both the terror and reproach of his sufferings. (Eclectic Commentary, page 186.)

We have here the account of Christ's riding in triumph into Jerusalem. When he came nigh to Jerusalem, God put it of a sudden into the hearts of the whole multitude of the disciples to rejoice and praise God; and their spreading of their clothes in the way was a common expression of joy, as at the feast of tabernacles. They expressed joy and praise; Blessed be the King that comes in the name of the Lord. Christ's triumphs, and his disciples' joyful praises, vex proud pharisees, who are enemies to him and to his kingdom. (Eclectic Commentary, page 188.)

When Jesus came near to Jerusalem, instead of being affected by thoughts of the sufferings that awaited him he foresaw with compassion the miseries coming on that ungrateful persecuting city, by the awful justice of God. But her day of mercy was then expired, her eyes were blinded, her doom was passed. Our Lord therefore foretold the entire destruction of the city and the havoc that should be made of its inhabitants, because they knew not the time of their visitation, and rejected and would crucify, their King. (*Howe*—Eclectic Commentary, page 189.)

Lesson XIX.—The Fourth Sunday in Lent.

THE RULERS CONSPIRE.—TREACHERY OF JUDAS.—THE LORD'S SUPPER.—THE AGONY IN GETHSEMANE.—JESUS BETRAYED AND MADE PRISONER.—JESUS BEFORE CAIAPHAS.—PETER THRICE DENIES HIM.—JESUS IS CONDEMNED AND MOCKED.—*Jerusalem, Bethany, Mount of Olives.*

Luke xxii.

Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover.

2. And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people.

3. ¶ Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve.

4. And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them.

5. And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money.

6. And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude.

7. ¶ Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed.

8. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat.

9. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare?

10. And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in.

11. And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

12. And he shall show you a large upper room furnished: there make ready.

13. And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.
14. And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.
15. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:
16. For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.
17. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves:
18. For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.
19. ¶ And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake *it*, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.
20. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup *is* the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.
21. ¶ But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me *is* with me on the table.
22. And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed.
23. And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing.
24. ¶ And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.
25. And he said unto them, the kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.
26. But ye *shall* not *be* so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger: and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.
27. For whether *is* greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? *is* not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.
28. Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations.
29. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me;
30. That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.
31. ¶ And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired *to have* you, that he may sift *you* as wheat:
32. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.
33 And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.
34. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.
35. And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing.
36. Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take *it*, and likewise *his* scrip; and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.
37. For I say unto you, that this that is written, must yet be accomplished in me. And he was reckoned among the transgressors; for the things concerning me have an end.

38. And they said, Lord, behold, here *are* two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough.
39. ¶ And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.
40. And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.
41. And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed.
42. Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheles not my will, but thine, be done.
43. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.
44. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.
45. And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow.
46. And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.
47. ¶ And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him.
48. But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?
49. When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword?
50. ¶ And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear.
51. And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.
52. Then Jesus said unto the chief priests. and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves?
53. When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me; but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.
54. ¶ Then took they him, and led *him*, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed afar off.
55. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them.
56. But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him.
57. And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not.
58. And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not.
59. And about the space of one hour after, another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this *fellow* also was with him; for he is a Galilæan.
60. And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediateiy, while he yet spake, the cock crew.
61. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.
62. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.
63. ¶ And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote *him*.

64. And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophesy, who is it that smote thee?
65. And many other things blasphemously spake they against him.
66. ¶ And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying,
67. Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe.
68. And if I also ask *you*, ye will not answer me, nor let *me* go.
69. Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God.
70. Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am.
71. And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.

NOTES.

Here we have Christ's sworn enemies contriving his death; the chief priests, men of sanctity, and the scribes, men of learning, seeking how they might kill him, either by force or fraud. A treacherous disciple joined them. Satan entered into Judas. It was the devil's work, who thought hereby to ruin Christ's undertaking, to have broken his head, but it proved only the bruising of his heel. Whoever betrays Christ, or his truths, or ways, it is Satan that puts them up to it. (Eclectic Commentary, page 194.)

The passover and the deliverance out of Egypt were typical and prophetic signs of a Christ to come, who should, by dying, deliver us from sin and death, and the tyranny of Satan; but the greater deliverance shall eclipse the lustre of the lesser. Therefore the Lord's supper is instituted to be a commemorative sign or memorial of a Christ already come, who by dying delivered us; his death is in special manner set before us in that ordinance. (Eclectic Commentary, page 195.)

Christians are called to participate in the holy communion by the command of their blessed Lord, to whom they are bound by the dearest ties of gratitude. (Bish. Hobart's F. and F., page 168.)

The Agony in the garden.—While we with thankfulness take the cup of salvation, and rejoice in the loving kindness of the Lord, let us never forget the cup of wrath which our Redeemer drank to the very dregs

for the remission of our sins. If we were not indeed drowsy in spiritual things, we could never read or meditate on what passed at Gethsemane without being deeply affected, and remembering much that might profit us. (Eclectic Commentary, page 196.)

Christ betrayed.—Luke notices the question Christ asked Judas, which we have not in the other evangelists; Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss? Is that the signal? As if anything could be concealed from him. Must the badge of friendship be the instrument of treachery? (Eclectic Commentary, page 196.)

Lesson XX.—The Fifth Sunday in Lent.

JESUS IS ACCUSED BEFORE PILATE, AND SENT TO HEROD.—HEROD MOCKETH HIM.—JESUS IS GIVEN TO BE CRUCIFIED.—*Jerusalem.*

Luke xxiii, 1-25.

And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate.
2. And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this *fellow* perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ a King.
3. And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest *it.*
4. Then said Pilate to the chief priests and *to* the people, I find no fault in this man.
5. And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.
6. When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilæan.
7. And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time.
8. ¶ And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long *season*, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him.
9. Then he questioned with him in many words: but he answered him nothing.
10. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him.
11. And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked *him*, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.

12. ¶ And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.
13. ¶ And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people,
14. Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and behold, I, having examined *him* before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him:
15. No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him.
16. I will therefore chastise him and release *him*.
17. (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.)
18. And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this *man*, and release unto us Barabbas:
19. (Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.)
20. Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them.
21. But they cried, saying, Crucify *him*, crucify him.
22. And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let *him go*.
23. And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed.
24. And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required.
25. And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, whom they had desired: but he delivered Jesus to their will.

John xix, 1–16.

Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged *him*.
2. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put *it* on his head, and they put on him a purple robe.
3. And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands.
4. Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.
5. Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And *Pilate* saith unto them, Behold the man!
6. When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify *him*, crucify *him*. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify *him:* for I find no fault in him.
7. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.
8. ¶ When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid;
9. And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.
10. Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?

11. Jesus, answered, Thou couldest have no power *at all* against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.
12. And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar.
13. ¶ When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.
14. And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!
15. But they cried out, Away with *him*, away with *him*, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar.
16. Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led *him* away.

NOTES.

The accusers mentioned Galilee, the northern part of Canaan. Send him to Herod then, said Pilate, since he belongs to Herod's jurisdiction. Pilate was desirous to rid his hands of the matter. But God ordered it so for the more evident fulfilling of the scripture. Herod, who had been acquainted with John Baptist, and had more knowledge of Christ than Pilate, was more abusive to Christ: for knowledge without grace does but make men the more ingeniously wicked. Herod returned him to Pilate. (Eclectic Commentary, page 198.)

Lesson XXI.—The Sunday next before Easter.

JESUS IS LED AWAY TO BE CRUCIFIED.—THE CRUCIFIXION.—DARKNESS PREVAILS.—JESUS EXPIRES ON THE CROSS.—THE BURIAL.—*Jerusalem.*

Luke xxiii, 26-56.

26. And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear *it* after Jesus.
27. ¶ And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him.
28. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.
29. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed *are* the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck.

30. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.
31. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?
32. And there were also two other malefactors, led with him to be put to death.
33. And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.
34. ¶ Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.
35. And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided *him*, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.
36. And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar.
37. And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.
38. And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.
39. ¶ And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.
40. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?
41. And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.
42. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.
43. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.
44. And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.
45. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.
46. ¶ And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.
47. Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man.
48. And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned.
49. And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.
50. ¶ And, behold, *there* was a man named Joseph, a counsellor; *and he was* a good man, and a just:
51. (The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them:) *he was* of Arimathæa, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for the kingdom of God.
52. This *man* went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus.
53. And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid.
54. And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on.
55. And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid.
56. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment.

NOTES.

We have here the blessed Jesus, the Lamb of God, led as a lamb to the slaughter, to the sacrifice. Observe how quickly they hurried this forward. He was brought before the chief priests at break of day, after that to Pilate, then to Herod, then to Pilate again; and there was a struggle between Pilate and the people about him. He was scourged, crowned with thorns, contumeliously used; all this was done in a few hours, for he was crucified between nine o'clock and twelve. (Eclectic Commentary, page 199.)

The Church celebrates on Good Friday, the fast which commemorates the sufferings and death of Christ. This day is called Good Friday, from the exalted good which we derive from the sufferings of Christ; who, "by the shedding of his own blood, obtained eternal redemption for us."

After the Saviour had been buffeted, scourged, spit upon, and mocked by the people and their rulers, he suffered the painful and ignominious death of the cross.

Crucifixion was a Roman punishment, and considered as the most ignominious and painful: it was painful, because those parts of the body which are most sensible of pain were pierced with nails, and the death was lingering; and the punishment of crucifixion was ignominious, because it was inflicted only upon the vilest criminals.

Since it was necessary that the Son of God should take upon him our nature, and suffer and die to atone for our sins, we should learn the infinite evil and guilt of sin, and should be excited sincerely and deeply to confess our unworthiness, and renounce our sins. The sufferings of Christ should impress us with a lively sense of his infinite love toward us, and excite us gratefully and zealously to serve him. The contemplation of the sufferings of the Son of God for us, who were his enemies, is one of the most powerful means of subduing in our hearts the emotions of malice and revenge, and of cherishing the sentiments of benevolence and charity. (Bishop Hobart's Festivals and Fasts, pages 169, 172, 174.)

XXII.—Easter Sunday.

MORNING OF THE RESURRECTION.—VISIT OF THE WOMEN TO THE SEPULCHRE.—*Jerusalem.*

Luke xxiv, 1-12.

Now upon the first *day* of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain *others* with them.

2. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.

3. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

4. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:

5. And as they were afraid, and bowed down *their* faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

6. He is not here, but is risen; remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,

7. Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

8. And they remembered his words,

9. And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

10. It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary *the mother* of James, and other *women that were* with them, which told these things unto the apostles.

11. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.

12. Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre: and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.

NOTES.

The Church this day commemorates the glorious event of our Saviour's resurrection. This festival, for antiquity and excellence, takes the precedence of all other festivals. It was observed from the very first ages; the only dispute being, not about the propriety of the festival itself, but about the proper day on which it was to be observed.

The observation of Easter was at length fixed to one and the same day, by the great general Council of Nice. (A. D. 325.) (Bishop Hobart's Festivals and Fasts, page 181.)

The manner of the reunion of Christ's soul and body in his resurrection is a mystery, one of the secret things that belong not to us; but the infallible proofs of his resurrection, that he did indeed rise from the dead, and

was thereby proved to be the Son of God, are things revealed.

We have here the affection and respect which the women showed to Christ, after he was dead and buried. As soon as they could, after the Sabbath was over, they came to the sepulchre to anoint the body, and to scatter sweet spices upon and about it.

Observe their surprise when they found the stone rolled away, and the grave empty.

Christians often perplex themselves about that with which they should comfort and encourage themselves.

Peter now ran to the sepulchre, who so lately ran from his Master. He was very particular in making his observations, and went away wondering himself at that which was come to pass. Had he remembered the words of Christ, even this was enough to satisfy him that he was risen from the dead. There are many things puzzling and perplexing to us which would be both plain and profitable, if we did but rightly understand the words of Christ, and had them ready to us. (Eclectic Commentary, page 201.)

Christ, by his resurrection from the dead, hath assured to Christians an immortal inheritance. As then we are "risen with him," we should "set our affections on things above." (Bishop Hobart's Festivals and Fasts, page 192.)

Lesson XXIII.—The First Sunday after Easter.

OUR LORD IS SEEN OF PETER.—THEN BY TWO DISCIPLES ON THE WAY TO EMMAUS.—*Jerusalem, Emmaus.*

1 Cor. xv, 5.

5. And that he was seen of Cephas.

Luke xxiv, 13–35.

13. ¶ And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem *about* three score furlongs.

14. And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

15. And it came to pass, that, while they communed *together* and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.
16. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.
17. And he said unto them, What manner of communications *are* these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?
18. And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto Him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?
19. And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people:
20. And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.
21. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done.
22. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre;
23. And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive.
24. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found *it* even so as the women had said: but him they saw not.
25. Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:
26. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?
27. And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.
28. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further.
29. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.
30. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed *it*, and brake, and gave to them.
31. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.
32. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?
33. And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them.
34. Saying, the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.
35. And they told what things *were done* in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

NOTES.

This appearance of Christ to the two disciples going to Emmaus, is here largely related. It happened the same day that Christ rose. They went to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. As

they travelled they talked together of all those things which had happened. Jesus himself came and joined them. They were sad. They had lost their dear master, and were, in their own apprehensions, quite disappointed in their expectations from him.

Our Lord Jesus reproves them for the weakness of their faith in the scriptures of the Old Testament.

Beginning at Moses, the first inspired writer of the Old Testament, Jesus expounded to them the things concerning himself; showing that the sufferings he had now gone through were the accomplishment of the prophecies.

Our Lord at length discovered himself to the disciples. They drew nigh to the village whither they went. And now, he would have gone further, if they had not courted his stay. Those that would have Christ dwell with them, must invite him, and be importunate with him; though he is often found of those who seek him not, yet those only that seek, can be sure to find. If he seem to draw off from us, it is but to draw out our importunity; as here they constrained him. Christ has promised that if any man open the door, to bid him welcome, he will come in to him. (Eclectic Commentary, pages 202, 203.)

Lesson XXIV.—The Second Sunday after Easter.

JESUS APPEARS IN THE MIDST OF THE APOSTLES, THOMAS BEING ABSENT.—*Jerusalem.*

1 Cor., xv, 5.

5. Then of the twelve.

Luke xxiv, 36–49.

36. ¶ And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you.

37. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

38. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?

39. Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

40. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them *his* hands and *his feet.*
41. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?
42. And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of a honeycomb.
43. And he took *it*, and did eat before them.
44. And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me.
45. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures.
46. And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:
47. And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.
48. And ye are witnesses of these things.
49. ¶ And, behold, I send the promise of my father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

NOTES.

While the disciples were discoursing, Jesus was pleased to appear in the midst of them in a miraculous manner, assuring them of his peace, his entire reconciliation, though they had so lately forsaken him, promising spiritual peace and every blessing. Yet, after all, they were greatly alarmed, as if they had seen a spirit. Jesus spake with them on their unreasonable unbelief, seeing that every circumstance so well agreed with his former declarations, and should inspire them with joy and confidence.

Christ wrought upon their minds in a manner which they themselves were sensible of. Observe that Jesus Christ by his Spirit operates on the minds of men.

He has access to our spirits, and can immediately influence them. Even good men need to have their understandings opened. The Spirit in the word, and the Spirit in the heart, say the same thing. That we may have right thoughts of Christ, there needs no more than to be made to understand the Scriptures. (Eclectic Commentary, pages 203, 204.)

Lesson XXV.—The Third Sunday after Easter.

JESUS APPEARS IN THE MIDST OF THE APOSTLES, THOMAS BEING PRESENT.—*Jerusalem.*

JESUS SHEWS HIMSELF TO SEVEN OF HIS DISCIPLES AT THE SEA OF TIBERIAS.—*Galilee.*

HE DINETH WITH THEM.

John xx, 24–29.

* 24. ¶ But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

25. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

† 26. ¶ And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: *then* came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace *be* unto you.

27. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust *it* into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

28. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

29. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed *are* they that have not seen, and *yet* have believed.

John xxi, 1–14.

‡ After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he *himself*.

2. There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the *sons* of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.

3. Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

4. But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

5. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No.

6. And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

7. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt *his* fisher's coat *unto him*, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.

8. And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.

9. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

10. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.
11. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.
12. Jesus saith unto them, Come *and* dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.
13. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.
14. This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

NOTES.

* Thomas, by his absence, missed the satisfaction of seeing his Master risen, and of sharing with the disciples in their joy upon that occasion. Thomas raised objections to justify himself in his unwillingness to believe that his Lord was risen. He either had not heeded, or had not duly regarded what Christ had so often said, according to the Old Testament, that he would rise again the third day.

† We have here an account of another appearance of Christ to his disciples, after his resurrection, when Thomas was with them. That one day in seven should be religiously observed was an appointment from the beginning; and that, in the kingdom of the Messiah, the first day of the week should be that solemn day—this was indication enough, that Christ on that day once and again met his disciples in a religious assembly. The religious observance of that day has been from thence transmitted down to us through every age of the Church. This, therefore, is the day which the Lord has made. Christ singled Thomas from the rest, and told him to satisfy his curiosity to the utmost. Here we have a rebuke of Thomas' unbelief in the plain reference to what Thomas had said. There is not an unbelieving word in our tongues, nor thought in our minds, at any time, but it is known to the Lord Jesus. (Eclectic Commentary, page 268.)

‡ Christ now showed himself to seven apostles. It is good to keep account of Christ's gracious visits; for he keeps account of them, and they will be remembered against us if we walk unworthily of them.

This is now the third; have we made due improvement of the first and second? (Eclectic Commentary pages 269, 270.)

Lesson XXVI.—The Fourth Sunday after Easter.

JESUS EARNESTLY COMMANDETH PETER TO FEED HIS LAMBS AND SHEEP, AND REBUKETH HIS CURIOSITY TOUCHING JOHN.—JESUS MEETS THE APOSTLES AND ABOVE FIVE HUNDRED BRETHREN ON A MOUNTAIN IN GALILEE.—*Galilee.*

John xxi, 15–24.

15. ¶ So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord: thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

16. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord: thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

17. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

18. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry *thee* whither thou wouldest not.

19. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

20. Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord which is he that betrayeth thee?

21. Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what *shall* this man *do?*

* 22. Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee? follow thou me.

23. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what *is that* to thee?

24. This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.

Matthew xxviii, 16–20.

16. ¶ Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

17. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

18. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying. All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.
19. ¶ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:
20. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

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1 Cor. xv, 6.

6. After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

NOTES.

We may suppose Peter full of doubts upon what terms he stood with his Master.

At length, Christ said what he had to say to him. He discoursed with him, not as with a criminal, but as a friend. Peter had reproached himself, and therefore Christ did not reproach him.

Peter had, before his fall, boasted that though all men were offended, yet he would not be so. He now answered, Thou knowest that I love thee; but without professing to love Jesus more than others. It is well when our faults and mistakes render us more humble and watchful.

Jesus called upon Peter to signify his readiness to adhere to his cause, even to death, by rising up and following him. This Peter did without hesitation.

*Most probably Jesus meant his coming to execute vengeance on the Jewish nation; but the disciples had a confused idea that Christ meant John should live till his coming to judge the world, or that he would be translated to heaven. The words had no such meaning. John lived till after the destruction of Jerusalem; he survived the other apostles, and then died in old age. (Eclectic Commentary, page 270.)

Lesson XXVII.—The Fifth Sunday after Easter.

OUR LORD IS SEEN OF JAMES; THEN OF ALL THE APOSTLES.—*Jerusalem.*

THE ASCENSION.—*Bethany.*

1 Cor. xv, 7.

7. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.

Acts I, 1-14.

The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach.

2. Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:

3. To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

4. And, being assembled together with *them*, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saith he*, ye have heard of me.

5. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

6. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

7. And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

9. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up: and a cloud received him out of their sight.

10. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

11. Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

12. Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.

13. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James *the son* of Alphæus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas *the brother* of James.

14. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

NOTES.

The commemoration of Christ's ascension at the expiration of forty days after the resurrection, has always been observed as a festival in the Church. (Bishop Hobart's Festivals and Fasts, page 203.)

The apostles assembled at Jerusalem, by Christ's command, he having ordered them not to depart thence, but to wait for the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, which he had promised to send. He points out their work, and with authority assures them of ability to go on with it, and of success.

Having left these instructions with them, Christ was gradually taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight.

The attention and hope of christians are now directed to the second appearance of their Saviour. The ancient church looked for his coming in the flesh; we, according to his promise, look for his coming in glory. (Eclectic Commentary, pages 273, 274.)

The ascension of Christ was declared prophetically by the psalmist: "Thou hast ascended on high; thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men." (Psalm lxviii, 18.) (Bishop Hobart's Festivals and Fasts, page 205.)

Since Christ, our divine forerunner and head, hath ascended into the heavens, we should also seek the things that are above. (Bishop Hobart's Festivals and Fasts, page 207.)

Lesson XXVIII.—Sunday after Ascension-day.

MATTHIAS IS CHOSEN AN APOSTLE IN PLACE OF JUDAS.—*Jerusalem*

Acts I, 15-26.

15. ¶ And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty.)

16. Men *and* brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus.

17. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.

18. Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.

19. And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood.

20. For it is written in the book of Psalms, Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and his bishoprick let another take.

21. Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us.

22. Beginning from the Baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

23. And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.

24. And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all *men*, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen,

25. That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.

26. And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

NOTES.

The whole number of disciples at this time assembled was one hundred and twenty, though we may conclude that others believed on Christ in different parts of the land. While uniting together in constant prayer, Peter, doubtless by divine admonition, proposed to appoint another apostle in the place of the traitor Judas. An appeal was made to God as the teacher of hearts. They desire to know which of these God had chosen. Lord, show us that, and we are satisfied. In answer to this appeal, the Lord was pleased to direct the lot to fall upon Matthias. The lot is cast into the lap, but, casual as the determination may seem, the whole disposal thereof is from the Lord. Let us own his hand in the determination of every circumstance which befalls us, and especially in those by which any solemn and important trust may be committed to us. And may the consideration of this be an additional engagement upon us to discharge it with becoming diligence and entire fidelity. (Eclectic Commentary, pages 274, 275.)

Our Saviour chose twelve Apostles, probably in allusion to the twelve patriarchs, as the founders of their several tribes, or to the twelve chief heads or rulers of the tribes of Israel. (Matthew xix, 28.) (Bishop Hobart's Festivals and Fasts, page 155.)

Lesson XXIX.—Whit-Sunday.

THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY GHOST.

Acts II, 1-11.

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

3. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

4. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

5. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

6. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

7. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans?

8. And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

9. Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,

16. Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,

11. Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

NOTES.

The Church, in the festival of this day, commemorates the gift of the Holy Ghost, who this day visibly descended upon the apostles. The feast of Pentecost among the Jews, instituted in memory of the delivery of the law on mount Sinai, became afterwards distinguished by the descent of the Holy Ghost on the apostles, enabling them to promulgate that spiritual law, which was the perfection and consummation of the law delivered on mount Sinai. This festival, therefore, corresponds to the feast of Pentecost among the Jews; and it has been observed from the very first ages of Christianity. This festival was, perhaps, styled metaphorically *Whit-Sunday*, that is *White-Sunday*, from the diffusion of light which in this day fell on the apostles, and enabled them to become "lights to lighten the world;" or it was so called, from its being one of the two principal seasons of baptism, when all who

were baptized wore white garments, in token of the spiritual purity which baptism designated, and the innocence of life to which they then bound themselves.

The ordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit are those which are given for the personal sanctification of individuals. Man, as a fallen creature, stands in need of deliverance from the guilt and power of sins past, and an emancipation from the power of sin, present and future. We may obtain these ordinary influences of the Holy Spirit, by the use of those means which God has appointed for the purpose, and which are therefore called the means of grace; by humble, sincere, and earnest prayer; by frequently reading and hearing God's holy word; and especially by a devout and uniform attendance on the ordinances of the Church; for to the Church, as his body, Christ has given his Holy Spirit; and by union with the Church, by the participation of its ordinances, we derive the influences of this Spirit. (Bishop Hobart's Festivals and Fasts, pages 209, 213, 216.)

Lesson XXX.—Trinity-Sunday.

JESUS TEACHETH NICODEMUS THE NECESSITY OF REGENERATION, AND OF FAITH IN HIS DEATH.—*Jerusalem.*

John iii. 1–15.

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

2. The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

3. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

4. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

5. Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

6. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

8. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.
9. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?
10. Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?
11. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.
12. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you *of* heavenly things?
13. And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man which is in heaven.
14. ¶ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:
15. That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

NOTES.

This festival, in commemoration of the doctrine of the ever blessed Trinity, is comparatively of modern date. As the praises of the Trinity were every day celebrated in the doxology, hymns, and creeds, the ancient Church thought there was no need to set apart one particular day for that which was done in each. This Sunday, therefore, was originally no otherwise distinguished than as an octave of Pentecost. The Church, however, in consequence of the heresies of Arius and others, who opposed this divine mystery, thought proper to order that the mystery of the Trinity should be more solemnly commemorated on a particular day.

The Church having celebrated in order all the greater festivals, the Nativity, Epiphany, Resurrection, Ascension of our Lord, and the Descent of the Holy Ghost, concludes these solemnities with a festival of full, special, and express service to the honour of the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity. (Bishop Hobart's Festivals and Fasts, page 218.)

Nicodemus, a principal man among the Jews, desired to converse with Jesus. He addressed Jesus by the respectable title of Rabbi, and his words show that he expected important and peculiar instruction. He was afraid or ashamed to be seen with Christ, and therefore

came in the night. Our Saviour discoursed respecting the necessity and nature of regeneratim or the new birth. Our Lord at once directed Nicodemus to the source of internal purity. Though Nicodemus understood not the mystery of regeneration, yet Christ asserts the necessity of it positively. (Eclectic Commentary, pages 213, 214.)

Since God is an infinite and eternal Spirit, and therefore beyond the comprehension of any finite understanding, we should learn the duty of implicitly receiving whatever he reveals to us concerning his own divine nature, though we may not be able to comprehend it. The doctrine of the Trinity should lead us to the most humble and holy obedience, and inspire us with the highest consolation and triumph; for it reveals God the Father reconciled unto us, through the atonement of a divine Redeemer; and it reveals the divine spirit of grace, by whom we are guided, sanctified, and consoled. (Bishop Hobart's Festivals and Fasts, page 224.)

THE END OF PART FIRST.

PART SECOND.

BIBLE AND CHURCH HISTORY.

FROM TRINITY TO ADVENT.

Introduction to Part Second.

Having in the first part of this book followed closely in the footsteps of our blessed Saviour, from His birth to His ascension into heaven, and having noted the descent of the Holy Ghost upon his Apostles, whereby they were qualified and enabled to promulgate and establish the Gospel in the world; it will be both instructive and interesting to consider now some of the leading events connected with the establishment and progress of the Church of Christ, under the Apostles and their successors, and to review briefly in connection therewith, the lives of some of the holy men, whose names are so intimately interwoven with the history of the Church. Before entering upon this field, however, it is necessary to go back to the creation of man, and give a brief outline of the history of the Church from the days of Adam to the advent of Christ, in order thus to prepare the mind more thoroughly to consider "that new and better dispensation which God has made to the world."

To condense so much in so limited a space (the twenty-seven Sundays from Trinity to Advent), embracing nearly six thousand years, filled with so many important and memorable events; and at the same time to convey any accurate idea of the subject, necessarily requires the utmost conciseness.

The First Sunday after Trinity.

FROM THE CREATION OF MAN TO THE DEATH OF ADAM.
B. C. 4004 TO 3074.

The Church will now be considered under the three dispensations, the Patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the Christian.

The Patriarchal Age, commencing with the creation of man, lasted until the delivery of the law upon Mount Sinai.

In those days there were no written laws as we have now, but men were governed by the natural notions of right and wrong, with which every one is born, and which we all begin to exercise as soon as we are able to reason.

God also at that time communicated with men by dreams and visions.

The Patriarchs (of those days) instructed their families in religious duty as revealed to them from God.

In public worship they used prayers and offered sacrifices.

Their places of public worship, where they erected their altars, were in the groves and mountains.

It is also certain that they had regular seasons for meeting together to worship God.

In those times the Priesthood, or those by whom public worship was administered, consisted of "the patriarch, or surviving head of every tribe, who was a kind of high-priest over all the families that were descended from him; and the first-born in every family was the ordinary priest, who might officiate in his father's stead, and who, after his decease, succeeded in his room."

Adam, after his fall for disobedience to God in eating the forbidden fruit, became aware of the anger of God, "and saw that it was necessary to propitiate the offended

Deity by prayer and invocation, by sorrow and repentance, and probably by offering sacrifice."

Adam reared his children in the fear of God, and instructed his family in religious matters.

Adam and Eve had two sons, Cain and Abel. Abel was a keeper of sheep. Cain was a tiller of the ground. Each of them made an offering unto the Lord. Cain offered "the fruit of the ground," and Abel offered "the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof," and the Lord accepted the offering of Abel, but rejected that of Cain. Cain therefore, being envious and enraged, slew his brother Abel.

The Lord condemned Cain to perpetual exile, and he went and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the East of Eden.

Abel having been slain, God gave his parents another son, whom they named Seth.

Adam died at the age of nine hundred and thirty years. (B. C. 3074.)

The Second Sunday after Trinity.

FROM THE DEATH OF ADAM TO THE DEATH OF NOAH.

B. C. 3074 TO 1998.

Seth.—Seth was a very virtuous and religious man. "He was (if we may believe the ancients) a great scholar; the first inventor of letters and writing, an accurate astronomer; and taught his children the knowledge of the stars. He asserted and propagated religion and the true worship of God, as he had received it from his father Adam."

According to ancient tradition Seth and his followers withdrew from Cain into a high mountain, (where Adam was buried,) where they led pure and holy lives, and daily worshiped God. Seth, just before his death, entreated his descendants never to descend from the holy mount to communicate or associate with Cain and

his wicked people. Seth was nine hundred and twelve years old when he died.

The descendants of Seth in the patriarchal line to the time of the deluge were, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech and Noah.

These Patriarchs lived to a great age. The youngest of them—Enoch, (the father of Methuselah,) was translated to heaven by God, at the age of three hundred and sixty-five years. Methuselah, the oldest, lived to be nine hundred and sixty-nine years old.

They were all good men, led holy lives, and endeavored to keep up the purity of the religion which they had received from Adam.

When about to die, all of them gave the same commandments to their followers; not to mingle with the wicked descendants of Cain.

During the lifetime of Jared, however, the Sethites began to decline, for notwithstanding his earnest efforts to prevent it, some of them descended from the holy mountain and mixed with the posterity of Cain.

By Noah's time, the intermingling of the descendants of Seth and Cain had produced a race of men noted for their wickedness. Josephus describes them as "a race of men insolent and ungovernable, despising all justice and equity."

The world having thus become so very wicked, God resolved to send a flood upon the earth. The flood occurred B. C. 2348; but Noah and his family found favor with God.

God ordered Noah to build an ark in which he, his wife, his three sons and their wives, and many animals of different kinds were saved. Every other living creature upon the earth was destroyed.

Through Noah's three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, the vacant world was again replenished with inhabitants.

Noah was nine hundred and fifty years old when he died. (B. C. 1998.)

He lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years.

The Third Sunday after Trinity.

FROM THE DEATH OF NOAH TO THE DEATH OF JACOB.
B. C. 1998 TO 1682.

Abraham.—Abraham, the son of Terah, was the tenth in descent from Shem, in the line of Heber. He was born B. C. 1996.

"He belonged to a wealthy pastural family dwelling beyond the Euphrates, in that district in which the town of Ur (now Urfah) was situated. This family was not free from the general taint of idol worship; for we are told that Terah, the father of Abraham, and probably also his sons, served other gods beyond the Euphrates."

"But God, who had designed him for higher and nobler purposes, called him at length out of his father's house; directing him to leave his country and his kindred, and go to a land which should be shown him; promising at the same time to make him a great nation, to bless him, to make his name great, and that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed."

Abraham obeyed God and entered the land of Canaan, after having crossed the great river Euphrates and traversed the deserts to the West. (B. C. 1921.)

This country acquired its name in consequence of its having become the habitation, soon after the flood, of the descendants of Canaan, the youngest son of Ham.

"Abraham had a numerous family and a vast retinue, and he was careful to inform them in the knowledge of the true God, and to instruct them in all the duties of religion."

Abraham died when he was one hundred and seventy-five years old. (B. C. 1821) He was buried in the cave of Machpelah in the field of Ephron, which he had purchased of the sons of Heth.

Isaac.—"Abraham being dead, Isaac stood up in his stead, the son of his parents' old age, and the fruit of an extraordinary promise." He was a good man; and God encouraged him to go on in the steps of his father, renewing the same promises to him which he had made to Abraham. Abraham selected for Isaac a wife from among his own kindred.

He married his cousin Rebekah.

Isaac died at the age of one hundred and eighty years. (B. C. 1716.)

His remains were buried in the cave of Machpelah, where Sarah his mother, his father, and Rebekah his wife, had been buried before him.

His son Jacob succeeded him in the patriarchal line.

Jacob.—"Jacob entirely devoted himself to the fear and service of God, kept up his worship, and vindicated it from the encroachments of idolatry." He married his cousin, Rachel, the daughter of Laban, Rebekah's brother.

"Jacob had frequent visions; God appearing to him and ratifying the covenant that he had made with Abraham. In his latter days he removed his family into Egypt, where God had prepared his way by the preferment of his son Joseph to be Viceroy and Lord of that vast and fertile country. He had twelve sons, who afterwards became founders of the twelve tribes of the Jewish nation. The tribe of Judah was the most powerful of the twelve, and had the first lot in the division of the promised land."

Moreover, it was foretold to Judah, that from his tribe the Messiah should arise; and so it came to pass.

Jacob was, at the time of his death, one hundred and forty-seven years of age. (B. C. 1682.)

"According to his dying request, his remains were carried up, attended by the chief officers and nobility of Egypt, to Canaan, and buried in the family vault at Machpelah."

Jacob died seventeen years after his removal to Egypt.

The Fourth Sunday after Trinity.

FROM THE DEATH OF JACOB TO THE DELIVERY OF THE LAW ON MOUNT SINAI. B. C. 1682 TO 1491.

Joseph and his brethren, after the death of their father Jacob, continued to live in Egypt.

Joseph died at the age of one hundred and ten years, (B. C. 1635,) eighty years after he was made ruler of Egypt, leaving two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

He predicted that the children of Israel would be finally led of God into the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and directed them when they went to carry his bones with them.

After the death of Joseph and his brethren, there finally arose a new king, who knew not Joseph, and he made slaves of the Israelites, and placed task masters over them, who treated them with great cruelty. He gave an order that every male child that was born to the Israelites, should be thrown into the river Nile.

Among other children born at that time was Moses; (B. C. 1571,) and his mother being desirous to save him, made a small ark of reeds and placed it in the flags upon the brink of the river Nile, trusting that God would save him; and his Sister Miriam watched to see what would become of him.

Pharaoh's daughter, who came to bathe in the river at that time, saw the ark, and had it brought ashore. She recognized the child as one of the Hebrew children, and determined to save it. Miriam then came forward and offered to bring a nurse from among the Hebrew women; and the child went and called her mother, who was employed as its nurse. He was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter, was reared and educated by this princess, and became "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." God chose Moses to command the Israelites and conduct them out of Egypt.

Directed of God, he demanded of Pharaoh the liberty of his people; which was refused, until at length after being afflicted with many plagues, he consented to let them go. Thus, after having served the Egyptians for at least two hundred years, they were delivered. (B. C. 1491.)

Pharaoh afterwards regretting that he had let them go, pursued them, when God made a way for the Israelites through the Red Sea, and carried them over in safety. But Pharaoh, in attempting to follow, was, with his great army, destroyed.

After this, the Israelites journeyed southward until they came to Mount Sinai in Arabia, called also Mount Horeb. They were led by a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night. When it stood still they rested, and when it moved they followed.

The provisions which they brought from Egypt soon gave out, and they murmured against Moses. God having rebuked them, sent during the evening quails, which covered the camp; and these were taken and prepared for food. In the morning the ground was found to be covered with something which looked like hoar-frost, and which tasted like sweetened bread. They called it Manna, and they were supplied daily with this food (except on the seventh day) for the forty years that they were in the wilderness.

While the Israelites were encamped in the valleys below Mount Sinai, Moses was called up by the Lord into the mountain, where he held intercourse with him.

On the fiftieth day after the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, the Lord descended upon the top of Mount Sinai, and amidst thunders and lightnings, fire and smoke, He gave the ten Commandments to the awe struck multitude at the foot of the mountain.

"But Moses and his brother Aaron ascended, although only the former dared to enter the cloud which veiled the presence of God."

The family of Aaron was selected for the higher services of the Priesthood; Aaron himself being high-priest. (B. C. 1490.)

In the second year after their departure from Egypt, the Israelites left Sinai, and journeyed toward the frontiers of Canaan. (B. C. 1490.)

The Fifth Sunday after Trinity.

FROM THE DELIVERY OF THE LAW ON MOUNT SINAI TO THE ACCESSION OF SAUL. B. C. 1491 TO 1095.

The state of things under the Mosaic dispensation will now be considered. This period of the Church's

history began with the delivery of the Law on Mount Sinai and continued until the coming of Christ.

"The Church, which had hitherto lain dispersed in private families, being now multiplied into a great and populous nation, God was pleased to enter into covenant with the body of the people, and to govern the Church by more certain and regular ways than it had hitherto been."

God, after having caused the Israelites (in consequence of their disobedience and rebellion) to wander for forty years in the wilderness between Mount Sinai and Palestine, finally, under the leadership of Joshua, conducted them into the land of promise, (B. C. 1451,) where he framed and ordered their commonwealth, appointed laws for the government of the church, and settled them under a more fixed and certain dispensation.

Both Moses and Aaron died before the Israelites entered Canaan.

Aaron died upon Mount Hor, (B. C. 1453,) and was buried upon that mountain. "And his tomb is still seen by those who travel in that solitary region." "He was succeeded in the pontificate by his eldest son, Eleazer." (Numbers xx.)

Moses, after renewing with the people "in the name of *Jehovah*, the covenant which had been made in Sinai, and having delivered the Book of the Law to the care of the Levites, took leave of all the tribes and ascended to the top of Mount Pisgah." From thence he viewed the promised land, to the borders of which he had led the people. There he died at the age of one hundred and twenty years, (B. C. 1451,) "and no man knoweth of his sepulchre."

After the Israelites had passed the river Jordan and entered Canaan, the first object of attack was the city of Jericho, which stood in the plain about two miles from the Jordan, and twenty miles from Jerusalem. Jericho was taken and destroyed. Soon after this, Joshua defeated the five Amorite kings at Gibeon, (B. C. 1451.) It was upon this occasion that, at the word of Joshua, God caused the sun and moon to stand still, when under the cover of darkness many of the enemy

would otherwise have escaped. "At the end of five years, Joshua had reduced the greater part of the country from the mountains of Seir to Lebanon." At this time (B. C. 1445) the lands were divided among the different tribes, and the tabernacle was removed from Gilgal on the Jordan to Shiloh, nearer the centre of the land, where it remained over four hundred and fifty years, until the time of Samuel. "The five or six following years were consumed in a desultory warfare with the unconquered states." (B. C. 1440.)

During the fourteen years which followed, the Israelites seem to have discontinued the war against the Canaanites. Having as much land as they wanted for the present, they devoted themselves to agriculture and the pursuits of settled life. At the end of this time (B. C. 1426) Joshua died at the age of one hundred and ten years. Joshua was an illustrious warrior *and an eminently pious and virtuous man.*

"We now enter upon the time of the Judges, a period of three hundred and thirty-one years, (1426 to 1095 B. C.) during which we shall find the Hebrew nation afflicted or prosperous in proportion to their neglect or observance of the conditions of their covenant with their Divine King."

"When they worshiped idols, God punished them by causing their enemies to triumph over them; and when they repented and turned to God, he sent them deliverers called Judges, under whom they continued prosperous until they sinned again, when they were again punished." The last of these Judges was Samuel. His mother Hannah (the wife of Elkanah, a Levite,) prayed to the Lord to give her a son, promising to dedicate him to the Lord all the days of his life.

The petition was granted, and she called his name Samuel. (B. C. 1149). When he had reached the proper age she took him to the tabernacle at Shiloh, and placed him in charge of Eli, the Judge of Israel, who became much attached to him and employed him in various services about the tabernacle.

When Samuel was only twelve years old he was called by night in a remarkable way to be a prophet. (B. C. 1137.) See 1 Samuel iii: 1–17.

Ten years after this the Israelites, without the consent of their Divine King, entered into a war with the Philistines, in which they were defeated, and remained in subjection to the Philistines for twenty years. Eli, who was now very old, upon hearing of the defeat of the Israelites, fell from his seat and his neck broke, and he died. (B. C. 1127.)

After twenty years subjection to the yoke of bondage, they finally, through the pleadings of Samuel, returned to their allegiance to their Divine King. Samuel was made judge over Israel. (B. C. 1107.) The Philistines were defeated and "were obliged to restore the places taken from Israel, and were not in a condition to give any further disturbance during Samuel's administration. The prophet-judge administered the government with great ability and care." At length, when Samuel was "old and gray-headed," the elders of Israel demanded "such a change in the government as would give them a human king 'to rule them like the nations.'" At first Samuel strongly opposed this wish, but at length, being authorized by the Lord, he granted their desire.

Saul, the son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, was, by Divine appointment, the first king of Israel. (B. C. 1095.)

The Sixth Sunday after Trinity.

FROM THE ACCESSION TO THE DEATH OF SAUL.
B. C. 1095 TO 1055.

Saul.—Soon after Saul was made king, he defeated the Ammonites, (B. C. 1095), which exploit raised him very high in the estimation of the people. Afterwards he made war on the Philistines, and aided by his eldest son, Jonathan, he gained a complete victory over them at Michmash. (B. C. 1091.) "Several years following were distinguished by successful warfare with the enemies of Israel." "At length Saul received orders,

through Samuel, to execute the Lord's fierce wrath upon the Amalekites, who had formerly been doomed to utter extermination for pposing the Israelites when they came out of Egypt."

Saul utterly defeated the enemy, but instead of carrying out God's commands, he reserved the best of the cattle as booty, and brought back the Amalekite king a prisoner. For this offence the Divine decree was pronounced by Samuel, which excluded his descendants from the throne.

"About the twenty-fifth year of Saul's reign, Samuel received the divine mandate to take measures for anointing the person whom the Lord had chosen to displace the race of Saul in the throne of Israel." He was directed to proceed to Bethlehem and anoint David, one of the sons of Jesse. David was then about fifteen years of age. Samuel, after anointing him, returned home, and David continued to tend his father's flock, without even knowing that he was destined to be the future King of Israel.

David, while still a boy, slew the giant Goliath with a sling and stone, which resulted in the disastrous defeat of the Philistines by Saul. After awhile David became so popular by his bravery in the field, that Saul became very jealous, and tried in many ways to destroy him, and even attempted to induce his son, Jonathan, to aid him in this scheme. But between David and Jonathan there had sprung up a very tender friendship, although Jonathan knew that David was destined to exclude him from the throne. So far from aiding his father, Jonathan always gave his friend timely notice of danger. Saul gave his daughter Michal to David in marriage, "that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him." (1 Samuel xviii: 21.) But all of his schemes for the ruin of David failed.

"And Saul saw and knew that the Lord was with David, and that Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him. And Saul was yet the more afraid of David, and Saul became David's enemy continually." (1Samuel xvii: 28–29.)

Repeated attempts having been made upon David's life, he determined, after a private interview and tender parting with Jonathan, to withdraw himself effectually from the designs upon his life, by retiring to a foreign land. Some four hundred men of broken fortunes joined him. David, for the next five years (B. C. 1059 to 1054), wandered through many countries, and used his troops as best he could, for the benefit of his country, Saul constantly pursuing and persecuting him. Twice David had Saul within his power, but spared his life. (1 Samuel xxiv: and xxvi.) During this time Jonathan encouraged David to trust in God.

Samuel died (B. C. 1057) in the ninety-second year of his age, "and he was much and deservedly lamented by the people." Finally (B. C. 1055) the Philistines gained a great victory over the Israelites at Mount Gilboa: Jonathan and two other of Saul's sons were killed, and Saul fell upon his own sword and died.

Upon this news reaching David he was much grieved, and "poured forth his grief for Israel, for Saul, and for Jonathan, his friend, in one of the most beautiful elegiac odes to be found in any language."

Saul reigned forty years.

The Seventh Sunday after Trinity.

From the Death of Saul to the Death of Solomon. B. C. 1055 to 975.

"Saul being dead, David inquired of God what course he should take, and was directed to repair to Hebron, the principal town of the tribe of Judah. At that place the men of Judah publicly anointed him as their king." (B. C. 1055.) Seven and a half years after this, he was proclaimed king over all Israel. (B. C. 1047.) His first act was to take the fortress on Mount Zion at Jerusalem, which was occupied by the Jebusites, and considered impregnable. Joab commanded his army on this occasion, and was, in consequence of this victory, made

captain-general of the forces of all Israel. (B. C. 1046.) "David then made Jerusalem the metropolis of his kingdom and fixed his residence upon Mount Zion."

This success made David very conspicuous, and attracted the attention of foreigners. He also so completely defeated the Philistines in two engagements, that they never again gave any serious trouble to Israel. When God had given him rest from all his enemies, he determined to build a temple (B. C. 1040), but God instructed him, through the Prophet Nathan, to leave that work to his son Solomon. "But God approved of the feelings which actuated David in this design, and promised that the sceptre should not depart from his family. To this was added an intimation which filled him with joy, that the long promised Messiah should be numbered among his descendants." (2 Sam. vii: 16)

David died at the age of seventy years. (B. C. 1015.) He had reigned forty years; seven as king of Judah, and thirty-three as king of all Israel. "Amid the lamentations of all his people, the remains of David were deposited in a splendid tomb, which he had prepared for himself on Mount Zion."

Solomon was born B. C. 1033, and he commenced to reign when he was about twenty years old. "His natural talents were of the highest order, and had been improved by careful education." Through the conquests of his father, Solomon inherited an extensive dominion. "It reached from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates, and from the Red Sea and Arabia to the utmost Lebanon." He had immense treasures, won by his father.

Solomon married a daughter of the King of Egypt. Three years having been spent in preparations for building the temple, the foundation was laid in the fourth year (B. C. 1012), and the edifice finished in seven years. (B. C. 1005.) "The remainder of King Solomon's reign is a history rather of peaceful undertakings than of warlike exploits." He built many splendid palaces and engaged extensively in commercial enterprises both by land and sea; Hiram, king of Tyre, uniting with him in trading in the Eastern seas.

The wisdom of Solomon and his immense wealth attracted many foreign princes to Jerusalem; the most celebrated visitor was the Queen of Sheba.

In his latter days Solomon was led astray and gave himself up to the worship of idols. As a punishment for this wickedness, it was announced to him that his kingdom should be taken from him, but that, "for David's sake, this should not be done in his time, but in the time of his son, and that also, for the sake of David, one tribe, that of Judah (with which Benjamin had now coalesced), should remain under the dominion of his house."

"There is reason to hope that his last days were penitential."

Solomon died (B. C. 975) aged sixty years, having reigned forty years.

The Eighth Sunday after Trinity.

FROM THE DEATH OF SOLOMON TO THE BIRTH OF CHRIST. B. C. 975 TO A. D. 1.

Solomon had many sons, "but the only one known to history is his successor, Rehoboam." Under his reign "(in accordance with the purpose of God to punish the house of David for the guilt of Solomon) happened the fatal division of the kingdom, when ten parts of twelve were rent off at once and brought under the rule of Jeroboam."

Jeroboam made the seat of his government at Shechem, and this new kingdom, by way of distinction, was known as the kingdom of Israel; while the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, under Rehoboam, were known as the kingdom of Judah. They retained the ancient metropolis, Jerusalem, as their seat of government.

Both kingdoms still professed allegiance to God, and both prospered or suffered in proportion as they obeyed or disobeyed His commands. But, very soon, Israel, under the reign of Jeroboam, commenced the worship

of idols, "and from that time religion began visibly to decline in that kingdom, and idolatry to gain ground amongst them."

"With the rapid growth of idolatry and the neglect of that religious system which was the true glory of the nation, the people lost all love for the good and the true, and gave themselves up to the grossest abominations that the heart of man can conceive."

Finally, their country was invaded by th Assyrians and their kingdom extinguished.

"Thus perished the kingdom of Israel, which was annexed to the Assyrian Crown under an Assyrian governor, after it had endured as a separate state, two hundred and seventy-one years, under seventeen kings."

The King of Assyria carried away as captives, all of those distinguished for their rank, wealth, learning, or for their knowledge of arms and the useful arts, and settled them in the region beyond the Euphrates, leaving only the poorer people in the land of Israel. He supplied the place of those taken away by captives from the lower Tigris and Euphrates. "The new comers gradually combined with the Israelites who remained in the country, and the population thus formed took the name of Samaritans, from the city of Samaria." At first they combined the worship of the true God with that of their idols, but gradually their belief assimilated itself to that of the Jews.

The kingdom of Judah remained "loyal both to God and their prince, firmly adhering to the worship of the temple, though even here too impiety in some places maintained its ground, having taken root in the reign of Solomon, who gave countenance to idolatry."

"The extirpation hereof was the design and attempt of all the pious and good princes of Judah. Jehosophat (B. C. 914) was most earnest in his efforts to recover religion and the state of the Church to its ancient purity and lustre."

But under the reign of Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah (B. C. 698), "impiety, like a land-flood, broke in upon religion and laid all waste before it." His grand-child, Josiah (who was a very pious man), made some amensd,

and but for his early death would have accomplished much more good. Under the reign of his son, Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, took Jerusalem and carried away a portion of the sacred vessels of the temple. Many of the nobility were also taken away as hostages, among them the prophet Daniel. (B. C. 605.) "Not many years after (B. C. 588), God being highly provoked by the prodigious impieties of that nation, delivered it up to the army of the King of Babylon." King Nebuchadnezzar burned the city and the temple to the ground, and carried the people captive to Babylon. "Thus was the land left desolate, and thus ended the kingdom of Judah." (B. C. 588.)

Cyrus, the Persian, having taken Babylon (B. C. 535), permitted the Jews to return to their own country.

After seventy years of captivity and punishment (B. C. 605, when the first captives were taken to Babylon until B. C. 535) in accordance with the prophecies of Isaiah, the Jews returned to Palestine.

Zerubbabel, who was of the house of David, was the leader of the first colony of Jews who returned to Jerusalem. To him Cyrus entrusted the sacred vessels which had been taken from the temple at Jerusalem; and under him the temple was rebuilt. The temple was finished B. C. 516.

The Jews remained under the government of the Persians until B. C. 331, when Alexander the Great, having conquered the Persians, the Jewish people became subject to his government. They remained under the government of the Greek monarchs of Egypt and Syria until B. C. 63, when Judea was subjected to the Romans by a large army under the command of the great Pompey. Herod the Great was appointed king of Judea by the Roman Senate. (B. C. 37). The temple built by Zerubbabel had been standing nearly five hundred years, and was much decayed. Herod the Great undertook to rebuild it. He began the work seventeen years before Christ, and completed the main building in less than ten years, so that it was fit for the service. The whole work occupied forty-six years. It was destroyed by the Romans A. D. 71. This temple is that

which Christ and His Apostles so often visited. "It seems to have been in many respects a much more magnificent pile than the great temple built by Solomon." It is minutely described by Josephus.

We now come to the birth of Jesus Christ, which occurred in the thirty-seventh year of the reign of Herod the Great. Herod, after causing all the children in Bethlehem under two years of age to be put to death, trusting that Christ would fall in the general slaughter, died himself in the same year of a most painful and loathsome disease.

The Ninth Sunday after Trinity.

Prophecies Concerning the Coming of Jesus Christ.

God having from the beginning of the world promised the Messiah, we will now consider some of the revelations and prophecies respecting his coming. God at the time of the fall of Adam promised to send a person who should be born of "the seed of the woman," and rescue mankind from death. (Gen. iii: 15.) Again, it was revealed to Abraham, that he should arise out of the Jewish nation, and that in Him all the families of the earth should be blessed. (Gen. xii: 3.)

"To Jacob God made known out of what tribe of that nation He should rise; (the tribe of Judah)," and when He should appear, viz: at "the departure of the sceptre from Judah." (Gen. xlix: 8 to 10.)

Moses foretells that he shall be the great Prophet of the Church. (Deut. xviii: 15-19.)

From David we learn that he would spring from his house and family. (2. Saml. vii: 16)

From the prophet Isaiah we have an account of the manner of his birth; that he should be born of a virgin, and his name be Immanuel. (Isaiah vii: 14.)

Micah fortells the place of his birth. (Micah v: 2.)

Daniel fixes the particular period of his coming; which was exactly fulfilled. (Daniel ix: 24–26.)

"The date of the prophetic Scriptures concerning the time of the Messiah's coming being now run out, in the fulness of time God sent his Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law; this being the truth of which God spake by the mouth of all his holy prophets which have been since the world began."

There are many more prophecies in addition to those referred to, which we have omitted for want of room.

The Tenth Sunday after Trinity.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST—ITS DIVINE ORIGIN—THE FORM OF ITS MINISTRY—EPISCOPACY DEFINED.

"All authority in the Church is originally derived from God the Father, by whom Jesus Christ was sent into the world. Jesus Christ, the Son, is now the source of all authority in the Church; and the person by whom ecclesiastical power is immediately conferred, is the Holy Spirit. That there were officers in the Christian Church does not admit of doubt. Our blessed Lord, the head and founder of it when on earth, chose twelve whom he named apostles; besides these he appointed other seventy. After his resurrection he invested his apostles with the same authority which he had received from the Father; *As my Father has sent me, even so send I you.* (John xx: 21.) As he had received authority to send them, so he gave them authority to send others. That the officers of the Church must receive their commission from God is manifest from Hebrews v: 4."

Episcopacy.—"Episcopacy is the divine constitution of the ministry, in the orders of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, with their appropriate powers; the order of Bishops possessing exclusively the power of ordination, of superintendence, and of supremacy in government.

"The Bishops were successors to the Apostles in the divine authority of commissioning others for the min-

istry and governing the Church; therefore it is only through a succession of Bishops, as distinct from and superior to Priests and Deacons, that authority to exercise the ministry can be derived from the Divine Head of the Church."

Our Church, the Protestant Episcopal Church in America, is through a succession of Bishops, descended in a direct line from the Apostles, through the British Church.

The Eleventh Sunday after Trinity.

THE EARLY PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY—FROM THE TIMES OF THE APOSTLES TO THE ACCESSION OF THE ROMAN EMPEROR CONSTANTINE THE GREAT. (A. D. 30–320.—THE PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH DURING THAT PERIOD.

"The number of disciples assembled in the upper room at Jerusalem after our Lord's ascension was only a hundred and twenty; but the miracle of the day of Pentecost and the sermon of St. Peter added three thousand souls, and ere long the number of the men were five thousand." (Rom. x: 18.)

The next account is that, "the word of God increased; and the number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." In obedience to the command of our blessed Saviour ("Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,") we find the apostles not long after his ascension "traversing almost all parts of the known world: and all this done in the space of less than forty years, viz: before the destruction of the Jewish State by Titus and the Roman army."

In this short space of time did the Christian religion diffuse itself throughout the then known world; many nations were converted, men forsook their idols and their sacrifices, and Christian altars were set up every-

where, "among the Romans, Persians, Scythians, Moors and Indians, and probably in the British Islands, which though unconquerable by the power of the Roman armies, submitted their necks to the yoke of Christ." This most wonderful spread of Christianity, (as Tertullian observes) "was a mighty evidence of Christ's divinity, and that He was the true Messiah." This great growth of the true religion continued, notwithstanding the cruel persecutions inflicted upon Christians by the Roman Emperors for three centuries. To the tyrant Nero "belongs the evil pre-eminence of being the first great persecutor of the Church." (A. D. 64–68.) Upon the pretense that the Christians had set fire to Rome, he caused a vast multitude of them to be subjected to most cruel tortures and even to death.

"Some were covered with the skins of wild beasts, that they might be torn to pieces by dogs; some were crucified, while others having been daubed over with combustible materials were set up as lights in the night time, and thus burned to death." And all this was suffered rather than deny Christ; for they were told that their lives would be spared if they would renounce the Christian religion. The persecution of the Christians was continued under the different emperors until the accession of the emperor Constantine the Great, (A. D. 320) who relieved the Church from persecution and defended its faith. Constantine was the first Christian emperor of Rome, and was born in England.

The Twelfth Sunday after Trinity.

THE BRITISH CHURCH FROM THE FIRST CENTURY TO THE REFORMATION, (A. D. 1517.)—THE USURPATION OF THE ROMAN PONTIFFS—CORRUPTIONS AND INNOVATIONS INTRODUCED BY THEM, WHICH FINALLY LED TO THE REFORMATION.

It is generally admitted that Christianity was established in Great Britain before the close of the first cen-

tury of our Era. Some authors have stated that British Bishops sat in early councils in Gaul (now France), and that there were at least three in the great Council of Nice (A. D. 325). This Council was assembled to determine the true doctrine of the Holy Trinity, by order of Constantine. But little is known of the condition of the British Church previous to the Saxon invasion in the fifth century. The persecutions of Christianity by the Roman Emperors extended into Great Britain, and there were many martyrs and confessors of our Holy religion in that remote Island. About the close of the sixth century, it is said that Gregory, the Bishop of Rome, when passing through the slave market in that city was greatly struck with the beauty and fairness of certain boys who were exposed for sale. On enquiring of what country they were, he was informed that they were Angli; English, Saxon English. Learning that they were Pagans, he determined to send missionaries to England to convert them to the Christian faith. Accordingly in the year 596 Augustine, with forty associates, was sent to preach Christianity to these Saxons, who were in possession of a great part of the country, having driven the native Britons into Wales and other retired places. Augustine's mission was very successful, and before many years a large part of the Saxon English had embraced Chistianity, and Augustine became the first Archbishop of Canterbury. Augustine soon brought the old British Christians into subjection to the rule of the Roman Church. The Roman control lasted until after the beginning of the sixteenth century.

The great evil of those ages was the ambition and cupidity of the Roman Pontiffs. "It had become a settled notion that the Bishops of Rome were the successors of St. Peter in the primacy of the Church by *Divine appointment*, and that it was the duty of every Church and every Christian to be in communion with, and to be subject to the Pope; and therefore that those who were out of his communion, or disobedient to him, were not Christians. This was in fact to invest the Roman Pontiff with absolute power in temporal as well

as spiritual matters. The history of Europe from this period, for two or three centuries, is little more than a history of the popes, and of their contests with emperors and kings. No part of the Church smarted more severely under the papal tyranny (for such it became) than the Church of England. The enormous power usurped by the popes, and the abuses in its exercise, at length paved the way for its own subversion, and for the Reformation."

Before entering upon the period of the Reformation, let us enumerate some of the errors and corruptions introduced in those ages, and which led to this most important event. The invocation of Saints, the use of images in divine worship, the adoption of the Latin language in the Church services, the assumption of the temporal power by the popes, the practice of private confession to a priest, the doctrine of purgatory, the doctrine of transubstantiation or the material presence of the body and blood of Christ in the bread and wine used in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, and many other errors and superstitions which we have not the space to mention here; but "these will sufficiently show the great necessity for reformation in the Church."

The Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity.

THE PROGRESS AND COMPLETION OF THE REFORMATION IN GREAT BRITAIN, AND THE PERMANENT ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PROTESTANT RELIGION IN THAT KINGDOM AND HER COLONIES.

Sometime before the Reformation there had arisen godly men in England protesting against the power of the Bishop of Rome and the corruptions of the Church; the most noted of whom was John Wicliffe, a learned Oxford professor, who translated the whole Bible into English, and who died in the year A. D. 1384.

About the beginning of the sixteenth century the corruptions of the Roman Church had become so monstrous that Luther, Zwingle, and many other pious and learned clergymen in Germany and other parts of Europe began to preach and write against them with great power and earnestness. This led to the great Reformation of the Church, to which is assigned the date of A. D. 1517. Henry the VIII. of England at first was a great enemy of this reform; but at last, for reasons of his own, became its friend, and in the year 1534 he threw off allegiance to the Bishop of Rome, and declared that he had no supremacy in Christ's Church, and no authority either civil or religious in the kingdom of England. King Henry was sustained by the English nation; and though he was not himself a very zealous reformer, yet his acts and influence were in its favor. King Henry was succeeded by his son Edward the VI. (A. D. 1547,) a pious and scholarly child.

The learned and zealous Bishops and Statesmen of his reign nearly completed the Reformation of the Church, and prepared the Prayer Book in English, almost exactly as we have it at this day. Before this the Church services were in Latin, a language which the people did not understand. Edward died about the age of sixteen, (A. D. 1553.) and was succeeded by his sister, Queen Mary, a zealous member of the Roman Church, known as "bloody Mary" from her terrible persecution of her Protestant subjects. Under her the religious reform was checked, and the Roman worship was restored. At her death, (A. D. 1558,) Queen Elizabeth, (one of the greatest English sovereigns,) succeeded, and the Reformation of the Church was completed during her long and prosperous reign. Thus the Protestant religion was established, and has ever since continued to be the religion of England and her colonies.

The Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity.

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL RELIGION INTO AMERICA BY THE ENGLISH, A. D. 1607—THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURH OF THE UNITED STATES, AND THE CONSECRATION OF THE FIRST AMERICAN BISHOPS.

When the first settlement by Englishmen was made in America, at Jamestown, in Virginia, in A. D. 1607, the adventurers were accompanied by a clergyman of the Established Church, and as new settlements were made in other colonies more clergymen came over; so that by the time of the Revolution (of A. D. 1776) the number in the colonies was very considerable, especially in Virginia and Maryland. The Bishop of London was their Diocesan, inasmuch as by the law of England all clergymen of the Church in America and the West Indies and other colonies were under his jurisdiction. There was no Bishop of our Church in this country previous to the close of the American Revolution in A. D. 1783. When the United States became independent of Great Britain, of course the Church became independent too, and Churchmen soon took measures to have Bishops of their own. The Book of Common Prayer was adapted to the altered condition of matters and government in the United States, and finally adopted in A. D. 1790. Bishop Seabury, of Connecticut, was consecrated by Bishops of the Scottish Episcopal Church in the year 1784. Bishop White, of Pennsylvania, and Bishop Provost, of New York, were consecrated by the two English Archbishops and three Bishops in 1787. Afterwards in 1790 Bishop Madison, of Virginia, was also consecrated in England. Thus the Episcopate and full Church organization in every respect was secured for the United States of America.

The Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity.

Introduction to the Lives of the Apostles and other Saints.

The first part of this book fully explains the principal festivals and fasts of the Church, as Christmas, Easter, Whit-Sunday, &c., which are festivals appointed in rememberance of special mercies of God, while the fasts, as Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, &c., are days set apart for abstinence, humiliation and repentance. But there are other festivals appointed by the Church which have not yet been considered, and which were set apart "in memory of the blessed apostles and other saints, who were the happy instruments of conveying to us the knowledge of Christ Jesus."

In reviewing the leading events in the lives of these holy men, and the progress of the Church under their ministry, we will consider them in the same order in which they occur in the "Book of Common Prayer," giving the date upon which each Saint's day occurs.

St. Andrew.

The festival of St. Andrew is celebrated on the 30th of November.

"St Andrew was the first who found the Messiah, (John i: 38–40,) and the first who brought others to him; the Church therefore places his festival at the beginning of Advent as the most proper to bring the news of our Saviour's coming."

"St. Andrew was born at Bethsaida, a city of Galilee, on the banks of the lake of Gennesareth. He was a son of Jonas, a fisherman of that town, and was brother to Simon Peter." He is generally supposed to have been the younger brother of Peter.

He was brought up to his father's trade, till Christ called him to follow him; for which he was fitted even before the coming of Christ, by instruction which he had received from John the Baptist. He was with John the Baptist about Jordan when our Saviour came that way.

The Baptist told him this was the Messiah. "Upon this testimony Andrew and another disciple (probably St. John) followed our Saviour to the place of his abode."

Andrew goes and tells his brother Simon, and they then both go together to Christ. They were not then called however, but returned to their occupation. Little more than a year afterwards, Christ finds them fishing upon the sea of Tiberias, and commands them to follow Him as His disciples, which they immediately do.

After our Lord's ascension into heaven, and the apostles had been fitted for their great work by the descent of the Holy Ghost, the apostles agreed among themselves what parts of the world they should severally take. In the division St. Andrew had allotted him Scythia and the neighboring countries. After he had by his indefatigable labours converted many to the faith, he came to Patrae in Achaia, where, having enraged the proconsul of Achaia by preaching the Gospel, he commanded him to be whipped, and then crucified him; and that the torture might be greater he fastened him to the cross with cords that he might die a more lingering death. This cross was in the form of the letter X, and is hence known as St. Andrew's cross. "He hung upon the cross two days teaching and instructing the people all the time."

He expired on the last of November, but it is not certain in what year. Of all our Lord's apostles, St. Andrew had the honor to be the first preacher of the Gospel, as he proclaimed to his brother Peter that he had found the Messiah and conducted him to Him also. The readiness with which St. Andrew forsook all and followed our Lord, the zeal with which he preached His Gospel, and his cheerfulness in giving up his life for his Master, are subjects well worth our most earnest reflection.

The Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity.

ST. THOMAS.

The festival of St. Thomas occurs on December 21st. Very little is known of the country or kindred of St. Thomas. He was certainly a Jew, probably a Galilean, and brought up a fisherman.

"The province allotted to St. Thomas was Parthia; he published the glad tidings of salvation to the Medes, Persians, &c., and at last came to the Indies, in which country he suffered martyrdom." While at prayer he was attacked with stones and darts, and killed. His disciples buried him in a Church which he had lately built in that country. "From the first plantations of Christians in the Eastern India by our apostle, there is said to have been a continued series and succession of Christians (hence called St. Thomas' Christians) in those parts unto this day."

Although St. Thomas at first doubted the resurrection of Christ, he finally believed; and from "the gentleness with which our Saviour treated his dullness of understanding, we may learn that, provided our minds sincerely intend God's service, He will either pardon our errors or deliver us from them,"

"This unbelief of St. Thomas serves to confirm our faith in our Saviour's resurrection by proving beyond all doubt or scruple that the very same body of our Lord was raised in which he suffered."

ST. STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR.

The festival of St. Stephen occurs on the 26th day of December, the day after Christmas; St. Stephen being the first who suffered martyrdom.

"St. Stephen, who was a Jew, and probably one of the seventy disciples, is described in Scripture as a man full of faith and the Holy Ghost, (Acts vi: 5,) by which he was peculiarly qualified for the honorable and useful office of Deacon, to which he had been advanced. St. Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people, (Acts vi: 8,) and by his ministrations the word of God increased so much that

the malice of the unbelieving Jews was excited against him."

He was, while upon his knees praying for his murderers, stoned to death. "Among the spectators, and perhaps promoters of this bloody deed, was Saul," who was afterwards converted to the religion of Christ.

"We may learn by the calmness and resignation of St. Stephen under such circumstances, 'that a firm belief in another life is the great support of a good man under the sufferings of the present.'"

The Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity.

St. John The Evangelist.

The festival of St. John the Evangelist, December the 27th.

"St. John was a Galilean, (Matt. iv: 21,) the son of Zebedee and Salome, and younger brother of St. James, with whom he was brought up in the trade of fishing, and with whom he was called to be a disciple and an apostle of our Saviour. He is thought to be far the youngest of all the Apostles, being thirty years old when he was first called to that dignity. He was the disciple whom Jesus loved; who lay in his bosom at the Paschal Supper, and to whom, as his dearest friend, our Lord, when he was leaving the world, committed the care of the blessed Mary his mother." For sometime previous to being called by Jesus, he was a disciple to John the Baptist. He remained with our Saviour when the rest deserted him. He stayed by him all through his trial and at his crucifixion.

"At the first news of our Lord's return from the dead he, accompanied with Peter, hasted to the sepulchre. Indeed there seems to have been a mutual intimacy between these two apostles more than the rest."

"St. John exercised his apostolic office in the East, principally in Asia, where he founded the Churches of

Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Laodicea. His chief place of residence was Ephesus, of which Church, after the death of Timothy, the bishop, he took charge towards the close of his life. At the command of the Emperor Domitian, St. John was sent by the proconsul of Asia, bound, to Rome, where he was cast into a caldron of oil set on fire, from the consuming fury of which he was rescued by the power of that same God who preserved the three Hebrew captives in the flames of a burning furnace. He was then banished by order of Domitian into the island of Patmos. Here he remained several years until recalled from banishment by the Emperor Nerva."

After this St. John returned into Asia and fixed his seat at Ephesus, where, with the assistance of seven bishops, he governed this large diocese.

St. John wrote the Book of Revelations while confined in Patmos. He wrote his Gospel at Ephesus at the earnest request of the bishops of Asia. Besides these, he wrote three Epistles.

He died a natural death about the beginning of the reign of Trajan, being about one hundred years old, having been an apostle for seventy years.

"St. John returned the affection of his Lord and Master by steady adherence to Him under his dangers and adversities. Hence we may learn that sincere love for the Saviour should lead us to bear His cross as well as to partake of His glories. In the writings of St. John we behold enforced the divinity of the Saviour, and the exalted importance and obligation of Christian charity."

The Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity.

The Holy Innocents.

On the 28th of December the Church celebrates the martyrdom of the Holy Innocents, "it having been the sense of the Church that they died the death of martyrs,

though incapable of making the choice." At the birth of our Saviour the wise men from the East came to Jerusalem enquiring, "where is He that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the East, and are come to worship Him." (Matt. ii: 2.) Herod the king being alarmed lest his own kingdom should be in danger, sent the wise men to Bethlehem to search for the child, and directed them when they found Him to bring him word that he might also go and worship Him, hoping by this means to get possession of our Saviour and destroy Him. But the wise men, after they had visited Jesus, were warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, and returned to their country another way; while Joseph, by the direction of an angel who appeared to him in a dream, fled into Egypt with the young child and his mother, where he remained until the death of Herod. "Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men." (Matt. ii: 16.)

Herod, under the pretense of worshiping Jesus, sought His destruction; hence we may learn that religion is sometimes used as a cloak for ambitious and worldly designs. Since innocent children were made a sacrifice to the ambition of a cruel tyrant, we may learn that suffering and affliction are not always proofs of guilt, but on the contrary are sometimes the marks of God's favour."

The Circumcision of our Lord Jesus Christ.

On the first day of January is celebrated the festival of the circumcision of our Lord Jesus Christ. As this rite is described in the sixth lesson of the first part of this book, we will not notice it further here.

The Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity.

ST. PAUL.

The festival of the conversion of St. Paul occurs on January the 25th. "He was not of the number of the twelve; yet, for his extraordinary eminence in the ministry of the Gospel he was styled an apostle."

St. Paul was born at Tarsus, the Metropolis of Cilicia, a city noted for its riches, learning and schools.

He was taught the trade of a tent maker; the Jews considering it a disgrace not to bring up their children to some useful occupation; but he was also liberally educated at Tarsus. Afterwards he was sent to Jerusalem, where he became a scholar of Gamaliel, the celebrated doctor of the law.

In the knowledge of the law St. Paul soon outstripped all his fellow students. He persecuted the Christians with great zeal, and after being accessory to the death of St. Stephen, got authority to pursue the Christians to Damascus in order to persecute them. (Acts ix: 1–2.) But on his way to Damascus he was struck to the ground by a great light from heaven, and a voice called to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" To which he replied, "Who art thou, Lord?" The voice replied, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Saul trembling and astonished inquired, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" He is directed to go to Damascus, where he should receive an answer. (Acts ix: 3–6.)

Upon rising from the ground St. Paul found that he was blind, and was led by his companions to Damascus, where he fasted for three days, when Ananias, (a very devout disciple,) directed by our Lord, found Paul and told him that he had been sent to him by Jesus that he might receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost. After receiving his sight he was baptized and initiated into the Christian faith, after which he joined himself to the disciples at that place. (Acts ix: 8–20.) St. Paul received from the lips of Christ himself his commission as an apostle to the Gentiles.

It is impossible in the brief space allotted us to follow closely in the footsteps of this most eminent apostle in

his extensive journeyings, by land and sea, in the exercise of his apostolic office. Suffice it to say, that "through the most severe hardships and perils he proclaimed the Gospel of his Saviour over the whole Roman Empire; from Jerusalem through Arabia, Asia, Greece, round to Illyricum, to Rome, and even to what was then considered the utmost bounds of the western world. Dismayed by no dangers or difficulties, he was zealous and indefatigable in preaching the Gospel, and in writing Epistles to confirm in the faith those Churches which he had established; thus persevering in the good fight of faith till he had finished his course." There is reason to believe that St. Paul extended his apostolic labours to the island of Great Britain.

"He was beheaded in the sixty-eight year of his age at Rome, under Nero, in the general persecution of the Christians upon the pretence that they set fire to the city. St. Paul left fourteen Epistles, which contain an admirable exposition of the plan of salvation, and the most forcible exhortations to the practice of Christian duties. As he was led to execution, he is said to have converted three of the soldiers sent to guard him, and who within a few days, by the Emperor's command, became martyrs to the faith."

St. Paul was buried in the Via Ostiensis, about two miles from Rome; and over his grave was afterwards erected a handsome Church. "The mercy of God to him who was 'the chief of sinners,' should inspire us with confidence to apply to God for pardon under a sense of our guilt. The zeal and faithfulness of St. Paul, after his conversion, should excite us to show the sincerity of our repentance by actions most opposed to our former sins."

The Twentieth Sunday After Trinity.

The Purification of St. Mary the Virgin.

On the second of February is celebrated the festival of the presentation of Christ in the Temple, commonly

called the purification of St. Mary the Virgin. (See Lesson vi, Part First.)

St. Matthias the Apostle.

The festival of St. Matthias occurs on February 24th. St. Matthias was not originally among the twelve Apostles, but when Judas killed himself, (in consequence of his remorse at having betrayed his master), Matthias was chosen in his place. The disciples of Christ, after the ascension, and before the descent of the Holy Ghost, being assembled at Jerusalem, St. Peter recommended filling the vacancy. Two were appointed; Joseph, called Barsabas, and Matthias; both qualified for the position.

The mode of election was by lots.

Having prayed to God that he would show which of these he would choose, the lots were put into the urn, and the name of Matthias was drawn out and he became one of the apostles.

He is supposed to have been one of the seventy disciples appointed by Christ.

After the Holy Ghost was conferred upon him with the other apostles, his labours were first confined to Judea, where, having converted many to the cause of Christ, "he afterwards, (according to St. Jerome), traveled to the countries eastward, where, after many labours and sufferings, he obtained the crown of martyrdom."

Though Judas turned out a bad and corrupt man, having been once chosen by Christ an apostle, he was equally empowered with the rest to do the work of an apostle.

"Hence we may learn that the wickedness of a minister does not invalidate his commission, or render useless his office. The efficacy of a sacred ordinance does not depend upon the personal virtues of him who administers it, but upon the Divine institution and blessing."

The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

This festival is celebrated on the 25th of March.

"By the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin is meant the declaration which the Angel Gabriel made to the blessed Mary, (Luke i: 30–31), that she should be the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c." (See First Part, Lesson iii.)

The Twenty-first Sunday After Trinity.

St. Mark the Evangelist.

This festival occurs on April 25th.

"St. Mark, though a Roman by name, was born of Jewish parents of the tribe of Levi. He was converted probably by St. Peter, whose companion he was in all his travels, supplying the place of an interpreter.

"The title Evangelist was first given to all who preached the Gospel; but it was afterwards confined to those four who wrote the history of the life of Christ, which history is styled the Gospel, or good tidings. St. Mark was sent by St. Peter into Egypt, to Alexandria, and the parts adjacent, where his ministry was eminently successful. He afterwards went Westward to Lybia and other countries."

He wrote his Gospel at the request of his converts at Rome. He outlived both St. Peter and St. Paul. St. Mark, while engaged in Divine worship on Easter, in Alexandria, was seized by the people and dragged through the streets until his flesh was so badly torn that he died. His remains were afterwards removed with great pomp from Alexandria to Venice, where one of the most magnificent churches in the world was erected to his memory. He died on the 25th of April, though the exact year is uncertain. "We should diligently seek to establish our faith in the truth of that Holy Gospel which the Evangelist St. Mark was, with others, an instrument in promulgating. We should therefore diligently read and study those Divine writings, which contain the words of eternal life."

The Twenty-second Sunday After Trinity.

St. Philip and St. James.

May 1.

"St. Philip, the Apostle, was a native of Bethsaida. He had the honor of being first called to be a disciple of our blessed Saviour, and was his constant companion and follower."

Upper Asia was the province which fell to his care, where he made many converts. He suffered martrydom by being crucified at Hieropolis, a rich city in Phrygia, where one of their principal deities, whom they worshiped, was a serpent or dragon.

St. James the Less.

"St. James the Less was probably the son of Joseph by a former wife, and therefore styled the brother of our Lord in the same sense that our Lord was reputed the son of Joseph. It is thought he was styled the Less to distinguish him from St. James (the brother of St. John) surnamed the Great, (either because of his age, being much older than St. James the Less, or for some peculiar honors which our Lord conferred upon him.)

"But he acquired a more exalted appellation by the piety and virtue of his life. *St. James the Just.* He was chosen first Bishop of Jerusalem, the mother of all other churches, and was particularly active at the council of the church at Jerusalem in the great controversy concerning the Jewish rites and ceremonies; for though the case was opened by St. Peter and discussed by St. Paul, yet the final decree was pronounced by St. James, from which circumstance appears the fallacy of the papal claims for the supremacy of St. Peter."

"The Scribes and Pharisees, enraged against him for his success in preaching the Gospel, cast him down from a pinnacle of the temple where he was addressing the people. Being very much bruised, though not killed by the fall, he recovered so much strength as to get upon his knees and implore the Divine mercy for his barbarous persecutors, and while he was thus praying

for them they loaded him with a shower of stones, and at length beat out his brains."

He died in the ninety-sixth year of his age, and about twenty-four years after Christ's ascension.

"He was buried (says Gregory, Bishop of Tours) upon Mount Olivet, in a tomb which he had built for himself, and wherein he had buried Zacharias and old Symeon."

"St. James was a man of exemplary piety and devotion. Prayer was his constant business and delight. He governed the church with zeal and fidelity He was distinguished for the meekness and humility of his temper, and for his temperance and self-denial." He wrote but one Epistle, addressed to the Jewish converts scattered abroad. "The zeal and resolution of these two apostles in promulgating the truth, should animate our exertions in the cause of religion and virtue. The example of St. James in praying for his murderers inculcates in us the duty of forgiving our enemies; and his remarkable self-denial should impress on us the importance of this duty."

The Twenty-Third Sunday After Trinity.

St. Barnabas the Apostle.

This festival occurs on June 11.

"St. Barnabas was born at Cyprus, and was descended of the tribe of Levi. His parents, who were rich and pious, sent him to Jerusalem, and committed him to the care of Gamaliel, a great doctor of the law, at whose feet he was brought up together with St. Paul.

"Not long after St. Paul's conversion, Barnabas met him at Jerusalem, and introduced him to the apostles, declaring to them the manner of his conversion. St. Paul and Barnabas laboured together in the establishment of the church at Antioch, where the followers of Jesus were first called Christians. (Acts xi: 26.)

"St. Barnabas and St. Paul were set apart by the command of the Holy Ghost to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles.

"It is supposed that St. Barnabas suffered martyrdom at Salamis, where it is said he was stoned by the Jews."

St. John the Baptist.

St. John the Baptist's day, June 24.

St. John the Baptist, the son of Zacharias and Elizabeth, "exceeded the rest of the prophets in the excellency of his office, which was to fit and prepare the minds of the people for the immediate reception of Christ and his doctrine. The resolute preaching of St. John, together with the severity of his life, drew to him many hearers from Jerusalem and Judea, and from the regions round about Jordan, and great was the number of his proselytes whom he baptized. He was beheaded by command of Herod. (Matt. xiv: 3, &c.)

"The humble and mortified life of John the Baptist should teach us that true greatness consists in the contempt of the sinful pleasures of the world, and in cherishing that humble and pious spirit which will set us above its highest enjoyments."

The Twenty-Fourth Sunday After Trinity.

St. Peter.

The festival of St. Peter is celebrated on the 29th day of June.

St. Peter was born at Bethsaida. Both he and his brother Andrew were fishermen, as was also their father Jonah. From the time that St. Peter was called by our Saviour he became a constant and inseparable disciple, "and together with the two sons of Zebedee, St. James and St. John, was admitted into the most close and intimate familiarity with his blessed Lord." (Mark v: 37; Matt. xvii: 1–2).

"There is not a word said in the sacred writings of the superior power of St. Peter; but on the contrary, in the very first council held at Jerusalem (where, and

not at Rome, was the mother church) St. James, the Bishop of Jerusalem, presided, and authoritatively delivered the sentence, (Acts xv: 13, &c.,) while Peter, with Barnabas and Paul, only discussed the question before the council. (Acts xv: 7-12.) In the epistles of Ignatius, and in the writings of the early ages of the church, there is not a word said about the *supremacy* of the Bishop of Rome. The respect paid to the Bishops of Rome in the subsequent ages was only a matter of courtesy to them as Bishops of the chief city of the empire.

"Their usurpations by a long course of intrigue, art, and corruption, were always steadfastly opposed and rejected by a great part of the Christian church.

"All Bishops, as successors of the Apostles, have equal power and prerogative in Christ's Church."

"St. Peter appears to have been naturally a man of a warm and impetuous temper, and heartily engaged in his Master's service.

"Trusting too much to his own strength, St. Peter became a signal example of human frailty, by denying that Master to whose service he had so zealously pledged himself. The penetrating look of Christ awakened in St. Peter a conviction of his guilt and ingratitude. He passionately lamented his base conduct, and thus became a lively pattern for us when we offend our gracious Lord and Master."

"St. Peter's first mission was to Samaria, where he went to confirm those whom Philip the Deacon had converted; and, by prayer and imposition of hands, to communicate to them the gift of the Holy Ghost."

After his wonderful escape from prison, (where he had been placed by Herod, and who intended to put him to death the next day,) St. Peter fled to Antioch, and became the first Bishop of that church. He afterwards preached to the Jews in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia and Asia.

About A. D., 69 St. Peter was crucified by Nero, with his head downward. "He affirmed that he was unworthy to suffer in the same posture wherein his Lord had suffered before him. The primitive fathers

have generally ranked St. Peter among the married apostles, as the scriptures make mention of his wife's mother." (Matt. viii : 14.)

"This apostle has left two Epistles, addressed to the Jewish converts who were scattered through Pontus, Galatia, &c." (1 Peter i : 1.)

"The superior love and affection which St. Peter manifested for his Master, which led him to expose himself to the greatest hazards, should inflame our hearts with the most sincere and lively love for our Divine Master."

The Twenty-Fifth Sunday After Trinity.

St. James the Great.

The festival of St. James the Great, July 25.

"St. James, (commonly surnamed the Great, either for his age or some peculiar honour conferred upon him by Christ) was a Galilean, born probably at Bethsaida or Capernaum. He was the son of Zebedee, an eminent fisherman in those places. (Matt. iv: 21.) He was brother to St. John, and they both had the honour of being related to our blessed Saviour, their mother Mary, named Salome, being either sister or cousin-german to the blessed Virgin."

St. James and St. John, while fishing in the sea of Galilee, were called by our Saviour. They immediately left their employment and their father and became constant attendants upon Christ in his ministry. (Matt. iv : 21, &c.)

"After our Saviour's ascension, St. James preached the Gospel in Judea and Samaria; and, by command of Herod, being seized at Jerusalem, he there suffered martyrdom, being the first apostle who laid down his life for the testimony of Jesus.

"The readiness with which St. James forsook his father to follow Christ, should teach us that no worldly considerations, not even the ties of nature, should come in competition with the express commands of God."

St. Bartholomew.

The festival of St. Bartholomew occurs on the 24th of August.

St. Bartholomew and Nathanael are supposed to be one and the same person. "St. John never mentions Bartholomew, while he often speaks of Nathanael; and the other Evangelists, though they mention Bartholomew, never take notice of Nathanael."

Our Saviour spoke of Nathanael as "an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." (John i: 47.)

"It is supposed that this apostle preached the gospel in Arabia Felix, and the hither India. He afterwards traveled through the northern and western parts of Asia, through Lacaonia, and at length settled in Albanople, a city of the greater Armenia, where, endeavoring to reclaim the people from idolatry, he was seized by the governor and, after being flayed alive, was crucified with his head downwards. This lingering and dreadful death he cheerfully sustained, comforting and encouraging his Christian converts to the last moment of his life."

St. Matthew.

St. Matthew's day is celebrated on September 21.

"St. Matthew, who was also named Levi, (Luke v: 27,) was a Hebrew of the Hebrews; and was probably a Galilean. His occupation was that of a publican (Matt. x: 3) or toll-gatherer to the Romans."

While engaged at his occupation, our Saviour passed by and bade St. Matthew to follow him.

"After our Saviour's ascension St. Matthew for about eight years preached in Judea, and afterwards he traveled into Parthia and Ethiopia, where he converted multitudes to Christianity. It is most probable he suffered martyrdom in Ethiopia, though the manner of his death is altogether uncertain."

"He has left the Gospel that goes under his name. This Gospel, which it is supposed was originally written in Hebrew and afterwards translated into Greek, was written by St. Matthew about eight years after the

death of Christ, for the particular use of the Jewish converts."

The Twenty-Sixth Sunday after Trinity.

St. Michael and All Angels.

This festival is celebrated on September 29.

"The scriptures inform us that St. Michael was an archangel who presided over the Jewish nation, as other archangels did over the Gentile world; (Daniel x: 13,) that he had an army of angels under his command with whom he fought with the dragon, or Satan and his angels, (Rev. xii: 7); and that contending with the devil, he disputed about the body of Moses." (Jude 9 v.)

"It is generally supposed that the fight mentioned in the Revelation of St. Michael and his angels, with the dragon and his angels, most probably signifies some eminent victory of the Christian Church, by the assistance of these ministering spirits, over the power and malice of the devil and his angels, who set themselves with all their force to persecute and destroy the Church."

"The Church celebrates this festival in order to express her thankfulness to God for the many eminent advantages she and her faithful members enjoy from the ministry and assistance of good angels."

St. Luke the Evangelist.

St. Luke's day is October the 18th. "St. Luke was born at Antioch, the metropolis of Syria. Here he was educated from his childhood, and enriched with all kinds of human learning, and afterwards visited the chief academies of Asia and Greece, and then applied himself to the study of physic, in which art he became eminent, and is believed to have excelled in painting. He was probably converted by St. Paul at Antioch, of whom he was a constant and inseparable companion. (Acts xvi: 10, &c.) St. Paul entertained a great affection for him.

The place and manner of St. Luke's death is uncertain. He wrote his Gospel in Achaia by the assistance of St. Paul, principally with a view to record many particulars relating to the Saviour, which the other Evangelists had passed over. The Acts of the Apostles were written by St. Luke at Rome while he was there attending on St. Paul in his imprisonment.

The Twenty-Seventh Sunday after Trinity.

St. Simon and St. Jude.

This festival occurs October 28.

"St. Simon, the apostle, preached the Gospel in Egypt and Africa, and it is supposed in Britain. He finally suffered martyrdom."

"St. Jude, the apostle, is reckoned among the number of the brethren of our Lord, being the son of Joseph, and brother of James, Bishop of Jerusalem. St. Jude preached in Judea, Galilee, and the neighboring countries, and at last suffered martyrdom in Persia."

St. Jude left one Epistle.

All-Saints Day.

This festival is celebrated on the first day of November.

"The Church has wisely set apart a day for the commemoration of those good and eminent Christians who have fought the good fight of faith, and been remarkably distinguished for their virtue and piety, and who are therefore properly called saints. The principal design of the Church in instituting this festival seems to be to honour God in the virtues and good examples of his saints." "By the observation of this festival we should be excited to bless God for the powerful aids and encouragements which he affords us in the practice of virtue, by the good examples of his saints, whose memories we should honour, and whose piety and virtue we should thankfully commemorate."

The End.

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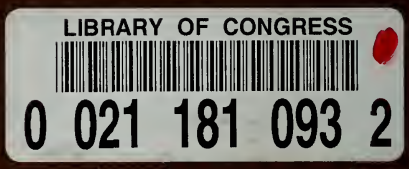
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